

# animals&men

THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



**BRITISH BIG CATS - IS EVERYTHING WE  
THOUGHT WE KNEW WRONG?**

**Giant eels in the Lake District; The  
legend of the goatman; BHM and Lake  
Monster Roundups; and much more...**

**Issue 41**

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# EDITORIAL



Dear Friends,

Harold Wilson once said that a 'week was a long time in politics'. Well four months, which is what it has been since the last issue of *Animals & Men*, is a hell of a long time in CFZ land.

Lots of what we have been up to is chronicled in the pages of this issue, but even cramming stuff in as tightly as we could, we had to leave some things out.

This year's Weird Weekend was an enormous success. It was not only the most successful event that we have ever promoted from a financial point of view, but a few hiccups notwithstanding, it was the happiest and nicest Weird Weekend to date. It is becoming a truly global event, as well as a community one in the best sense of the word. This year, we had speakers fly in from the Ukraine, from America and from Ireland and we would have liked to have told you all about it in this issue, but there just wasn't room. Roll on issue 42.

We are also very proud to be able to announce two major sponsorship deals; with Travis Perkins, the builder's merchants, and with Capcom, the computer game publishers. It is by forging partnerships like these, with businesses around the world, that the CFZ will finally begin to achieve its full potential. Our publishing arm, CFZ Press, continues to grow apace. We are pleased that, in the last four months, we have published books by Neil Arnold, Marcus Matthews, Nick Redfern, and Karl Shuker, and over the next twenty-four months we have

another twenty titles planned. This will make us the biggest dedicated cryptozoological publisher that has ever existed.

The CFZ, as an entity, is far more important than any of the individual people who work for it. When I founded the CFZ in 1992, I had a dream of being able to publish on this scale, of being able to mount expeditions all over the world, of having a museum, and of being able to provide a truly global resource for those people who are interested in the study of unknown animals. It is very gratifying to be able to look around and see what we have achieved.

But the CFZ is not just about finding new species of animals. It is about studying them, and working together with other agencies on conservation initiatives across the world. Conservation has always been at the heart of what we do, and it is very gratifying to announce that our good friends Chris Moiser and Jane Bassett have just bought Tropiquaria, a small zoo on the edge of Exmoor. It is even more gratifying to be able to announce that my lovely wife, Corinna, is a 10% shareholder in the zoo. According to my late mother, the first word I said was 'zoo', and I have been obsessed with them ever since. It is wonderful, at the age of 48, to be able to wake up in the morning to the knowledge that I have finally married one.

It goes against the grain to misquote New Labour under any circumstances, but for the CFZ, 'things really are only going to get better'.

Jonathan Downes, Director CFZ

## "THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE"

# THE FACULTY OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



*"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her secrets." (Goethe)*

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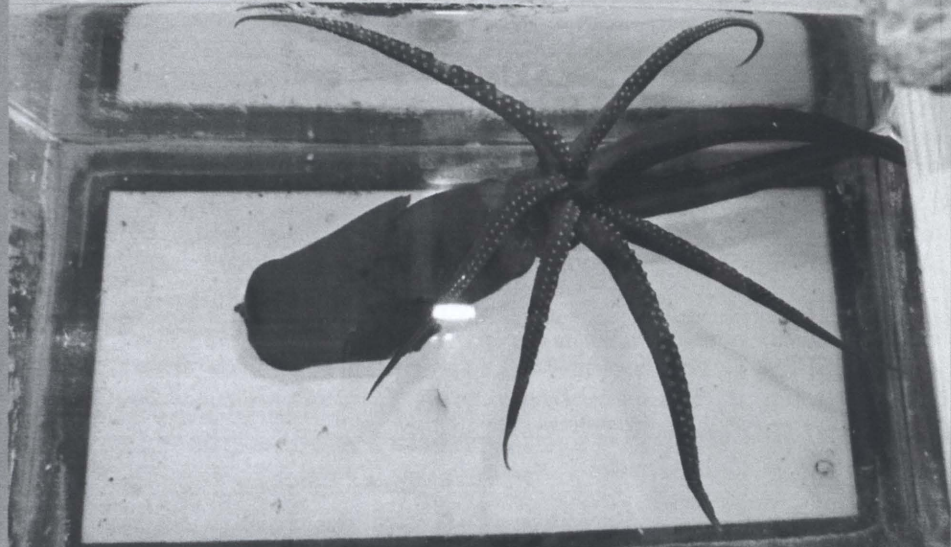
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# NEWSFILE

Edited and compiled by Richard Freeman and Jonathan Downes

## CEPHALO-ODD



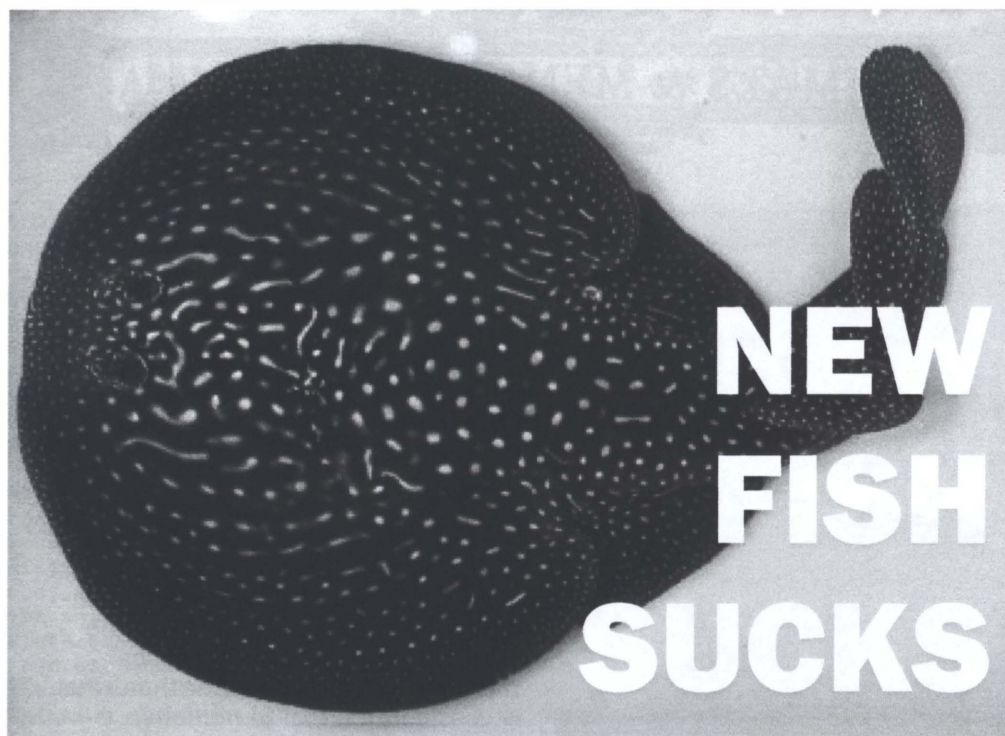
A bizarre beast that resembles a hybrid twixt octopus and squid, has been captured off Keyhole Point, Big Island, Hawaii. The specimen was found caught in a filter in one of Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority's deep-sea water pipelines. The pipeline, which runs 3,000 feet deep, sucks up cold, deep-sea water for the tenants of the natural energy lab.

*"When we first saw it, I was really delighted because it was new and*

*alive,"* said Jan War, operations manager at NELHA. *"I've never seen anything like that."* According to Richard Young, an oceanography professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the specimen tentatively belongs to the genus *Mastigoteuthis*, but the species is undetermined. War, who termed the specimen "octosquid" for the way it looked, said it was about a foot long, with white suction cups, eight tentacles and an octopus head with a squidlike mantle.

## NEW AND REDSCOVERED





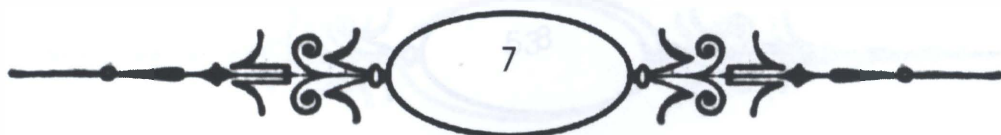
A new genus, and species, of electric ray, discovered off South Africa has been named after a vacuum cleaner. *Electrolux addisoni*, is described in the latest issue of the journal *Smithiana Bulletin* by Leonard Compagno and Phillip Heemstra. The genus name raises eyebrows, and its origin is best explained in the authors' own words:

*"The name alludes to the well-developed electrogenic properties of this ray (collectors and photographers have experienced the shocking personality of this bold, active and brightly patterned electric ray first-hand), the discovery of which sheds light (Latin, lux) on the rich and poorly-known fish diversity of the Western Indian Ocean.*

## IT'S A STITCH-UP

A new family of indigenous New Zealand birds has been created after a crucial discovery aided by the curator of Auckland Museum. Dr Brian Gill, and an international team of scientists have discovered that the stitchbird or "hihi" belongs to a family of its own and has no close relatives.

For years it was widely held that the stitchbird was part of the tui and bellbird family of honeyeaters. It was given the name *Notiomystis cincta* when discovered in 1908, derived from Greek words meaning "southern mystery" because even then it was





thought to be a somewhat strange little bird. Now the mystery has been solved after the team, comprising molecular biologists and museum staff from the United States, Australia and New Zealand, have confirmed the stitchbird has no close relatives and is actually in a family of its own. There were thought to be only three surviving families of endemic New Zealand birds: kiwi (Apterygidae), New Zealand wrens (Acanthisittidae) and New Zealand wattlebirds (Callaeidae). Six years of research has now proven there is a fourth - the stitchbird (Notiomystidae).

## RADIOACTIVE SLIME

Two years ago scientists fished a strange slime off a probe used to examine decades-old, high-level nuclear waste inside tanks stored at the Savannah River National Laboratory in South Carolina. *"At first, nobody was sure what it was,"* said Christopher Bagwell, a senior scientist at the lab. It turns out, the greenish-orange slime was alive and has the ability to survive radiation doses thousands of times greater than what is considered lethal to humans.

*"Finding an organism in such a toxic environment is very unexpected,"* said Dr. Bagwell, who will present a paper about the bacteria - dubbed *Kineococcus radiotolerans* - to the American Society for Microbiology. In addition to thriving in the face of normally-lethal radiation, the organism also demonstrates remarkable survival characteristics in terms of its DNA.

Humans and most organisms can tolerate few breaks in DNA molecules, he said, but *Kineococcus radiotolerans* has the ability to reassemble itself.

*"With this organism, we can take an intact DNA molecule, blast it into little pieces, and in five to six hours the*



organism is restored and growing normally again," Dr. Bagwell said.

Dr. Bagwell and others who have studied the organism hope further research will yield clues that could aid in medical research, cancer studies, and other areas.

## THE TOE-BITERS OF THAILAND

Entomologists have discovered 50 new species of insects in Thailand, some of which are water bugs large enough to eat small fish - and inflict intense bites on curious humans.

Robert Sites and his team have described 12 of the 50 new species so far: six of the ferocious bugs belong to the same family as water striders, also known as Gerridae, which propel themselves along the surface of water. The other six belong to the family Aphelocheiridae, a group that includes "toe biters," which dwell in the gravel of streams and hunt for prey there. Once the bugs locate prey, they stun it with a bite. *"It's much, much worse than a bee or wasp sting,"* Sites said. *"I was bitten in the pad of my little finger, and I felt intense pain all the way to my elbow for a good 30 minutes."*

After the prey is stunned, the

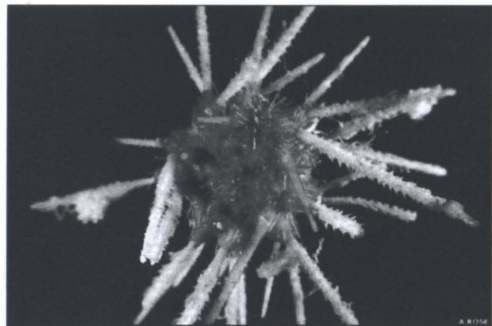
predatory insects whip a straw-like appendage out and pump toxins into their meal, liquifying it from the inside-out. *"After that, they suck out the juice".*

The bites may be painful, but none are dangerous to humans. *"From a scientific perspective, they're all cool,"* Sites said. *"They feed on other insects that they can overpower in the streams. Some even eat small fish."*

## NEW ZOO IN ANTARCTICA

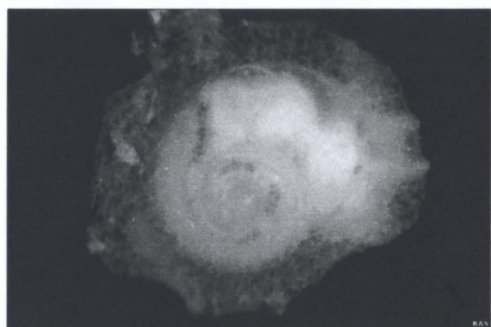
An international team of scientists has discovered life in the Antarctic deep is much more diverse than previously thought. This male Munna crustacean was one of more than 1,000 species found living in this harsh environment.





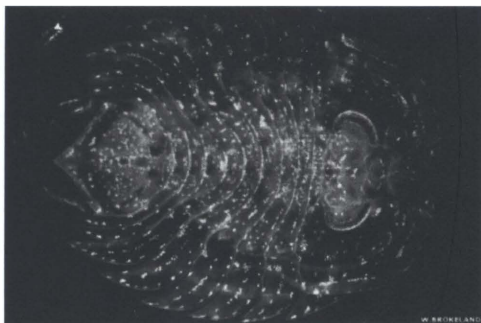
The research, which uncovered creatures such as this *Ctenocidaris*, formed part of the Andeep (Antarctic benthic deep-sea biodiversity) project.

It is the first comprehensive look at marine life in these waters. More than 700 of the marine creatures found were completely new to science, such as the small gastropod pictured here.



The researchers, writing in the journal *Nature*, said an "astonishingly diverse" collection of isopods had been discovered.

This young male isopod represents one of 674 isopod species found.



The international team also found this brightly coloured member of the crustacean family Epimeriidae. This pink species is new to science and is the first deep-sea member of this group.



They are amphipods - an order of animals that includes over 7,000 described species of small, shrimp-like crustaceans. Most amphipods are marine; although a small number of species are limnic or terrestrial.



Seventy-six species of sponge, including this glass sponge, made up some of the larger fauna discovered in the Antarctic deep.

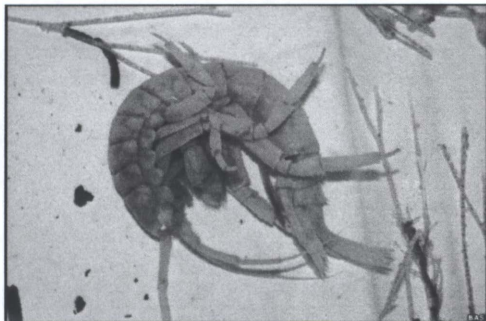


Among them, 37 had never been spotted in the Southern Ocean before. Scientists plan to study the differences between marine creatures found in the shallow waters, and those that live in the Antarctic deep.

The differences can be quite spectacular.

For example, this deep-sea species of

Paraceradocus is white in colour, but related species found in shallower waters are bright red.

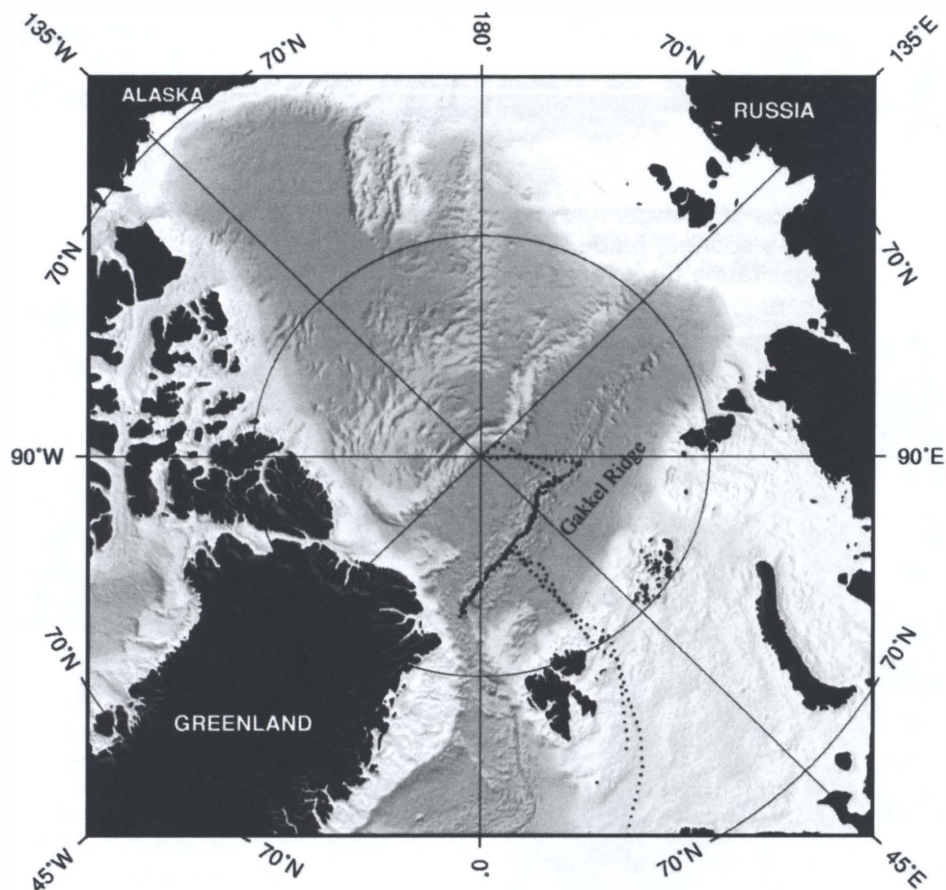


## HOT SPRINGS ETERNAL

On the other side of the world, another expedition is underway. The Gakkel Ridge, encased under the frozen Arctic Ocean, is steep and rocky, and scientists suspect its remote location hosts an array of undiscovered life.

Researchers hope newly developed robots will give them their first look at the mysterious ridge located between Greenland and Siberia.

Scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution plan to use the robots to navigate and map its terrain and sample any life found near a series of underwater hot springs.



Tim Shank, lead biologist on the international expedition, said researchers have no idea what new life at the ridge might be like.

The Gakkel Ridge marks a 1,100-mile stretch from north of Greenland toward Siberia, where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates continuously move away from each other. Scientists believe new life could be discovered there, because of hot springs that are created at such tectonic boundaries, when ocean water

comes into contact with hot magma rising from the earth's mantle.

The organisms known to exist in the Arctic basin, where the Gakkel is located, may have evolved in a unique fashion because they were mostly isolated from the life in the deep waters of other oceans, for all but the last 25 million years. Two expedition robots will descend to about 5,000 metres, and work 5 to 6 metres off the bottom, photographing and removing samples.



## SURINAME JAM



Scientists exploring the South American country of Suriname have discovered 24 species believed to be new to science. Included in the discovery were a black and purple frog, 12 dung beetles, six species of fish, an ant species and four other frog species.

Overall the survey recorded 467 species, including the large big cats (puma and panther), monkeys, bats, birds and reptiles. Researchers behind the report, led by Conservation International (CI), are calling for greater conservation efforts in the area to address and halt threats from hunting, and small-scale illegal gold mining.

They argue that strategies should focus on protecting freshwater streams and preventing fragmentation of their natural habitat from unchecked or poorly planned development.

*"Suriname has some of the Amazon's most pristine and intact rainforest, which offers huge potential for scientific research and economic investment in carbon sequestration, as well as the sustenance it has always provided local communities," said Leeanne Alonso, CI vice president. "Our study will be a vital component in determining how to promote economic development in Suriname while protecting the nation's most valuable natural assets."*

## ON THE BONE

A new species of Pacific sea anemone has been found living on a whale carcass. The 10 specimens collected were sent to Meg Daly of Ohio State University. Daly runs one of the very few laboratories in the world equipped to study sea anemones.



The anemone, given the scientific name *Anthosactis pearseae*, is small, white, and roughly cube-shaped. It's about the size of a human molar, and even looks like a tooth with small tentacles on one side.



# NEWSFILE XTRA: Mystery killers in Iraq

## THE BEASTS OF BASRAH

We usually try to stay clear of making overtly political statements in this magazine, but it is an open secret that - together with every right minded human being on the planet - we consider the war in Iraq to be a very bad thing indeed. However, this is not the time or the place to enter into a political debate, but one thing that is interesting - from our point of view at least - is the minor proliferation of cryptozoological news stories that have come out of the war.

First was the image of one of the so-called 'rods' which appeared in a CNN live broadcast of the 'shock and awe' air raids on Baghdad. We featured this image

on our front cover a couple of years ago.

The second were the stories of huge 'camel spiders' encountered by the invading army. There was also a photograph which accompanied the story, but it is patently obvious that this one is a fake - albeit a rather entertaining one. There *are* such things as camel spiders - or solifugae.

They are the subject of many myths and exaggerations about their size, speed, behaviour, appetite, and lethality. They are not especially large, the biggest having a legspan of perhaps 12 cm.

They are fast on land compared to other invertebrates - the fastest can run perhaps 10 miles per hour (16 km/h), nearly half as fast as the fastest human sprinter. Members of this order of



Arachnida have no venom, with the possible exception of one species in India, and do not spin webs. In the Middle East, it was rumoured among American and coalition military forces stationed there, that Solifugae will feed on living human flesh. The story goes that they inject an anaesthetising venom into the exposed skin of its sleeping victim, then feed voraciously, leaving the victim to awaken with a gaping wound.

Solifugae, however, do *not* produce such an anaesthetic, and they do not attack prey larger than themselves unless threatened. Other stories include tales of them leaping into the air, disembowelling camels, making an eerie hissing, screaming, and running alongside Humvees; all of these tales are false, apparently told to new recruits in order to frighten them, to the amusement of the veterans.

But the third set of stories from Iraq seem to be true!

Rumours have been circulating in Basrah about a strange bear-like, deadly, creature that attacks people at night with its strong claws. Locals in rural areas

around Basrah claim it has killed three people and injured six others, and that it usually pounces on its victims as they are sleeping outdoors during hot summer nights, when electric power outages are common.

Farmers at Garmat Ali, Abu Skheer, Jisr and Shikhatta were so alarmed, they assigned guarding duties at night to prevent its attacks, the Nahrain website and Radio Sawa reported last week.

Eventually, several animals were caught or killed - up to 28, locals claimed - and mobile phone videos of them were published on Iraqi websites and forums. The dead creatures look like honey badgers, compact but vicious omnivores that typically consume insects and small animals. Honey badgers are more prevalent in Iran - their presence in Iraq dwindled after the destruction of the salt marsh habitat in the south.

According to Mudhar Nazar, a resident interviewed by the pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* daily. *"It looks like a dog, but its head looks like that of a bear,"* said Nazar. *"It has short hands and 15-cm-long claws, long hair, a penis like a man's, and it only moves around at night."*

The animal is known locally as the Garta or 'the muncher,' and mothers in Basrah used to tell scary stories about the Garta to their children so they would not wander out alone at night. Old families in Basrah believe the animal brings bad luck, because it is mostly found in cemeteries at night. The unusual phenomenon, however, is their sudden appearance in large numbers near the city and their increasingly aggressive behaviour.

The rumours led people to indulge in conspiracy theories, speculating that





U.S. or British forces have dropped large numbers of this animal, (or in one particularly amusing variant of the story - its "eggs") around Basrah in order to spread chaos and instability, while others say the animal crossed over from neighboring Iran through the marshes. Dr. Abdul Mahdi said the hospital has so far received three of the badgers killed by farmers in Garmat Ali, Shikhatta and Abu Sikheer.

*Mellivora capensis*, the ratel or honey badger is a mustelid and could be described as the 'wolverine of the tropics'. Several African tribes state that it attacks the genitals of larger mammals, and will castrate humans if provoked! Originally from Africa, the species has spread through much of the Middle East and India. It has even been recorded as far east as Myanmar (Burma) so the idea of it moving into new areas is not unusual.

Bernard Heuvelmans recounts a sighting by Georges Sandrart, in the Congo, of a ratel that was described as being only slightly shorter than a European bear. Heuvelmans found that some ratel pelts from Central Africa were as much as 1.10 meters long, only slightly smaller than the Malayan sun bear. Heuvelmans thought that exceptional large, dark furred specimens were behind the legend of the bloodthirsty Nandi bear or

chemosit.

After the First Gulf War (1991) Saddam Hussein aggressively revived a programme to divert the flow of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers away from the marshes, in retribution for a failed Shia uprising. This was done primarily to eliminate the food source(s) of the Marsh Arabs. The plan also systematically converted the wetlands into a desert, forcing the Marsh Arabs out of their settlements in the region. With the ending of a four year drought in 2003, and the breaching of dykes by local communities, the process has been reversed and the marshes have experienced a substantial rate of recovery. The permanent wetlands now cover more than 50% of 1970s levels. The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, and subsequent coalition and Iraqi efforts to restore the marshes, have led to signs of their gradual revivification, as water is restored to the former desert, but the ecosystem may take far longer to restore than it took to destroy.

The fact that the ratel seems to be not only recolonising its old haunts, but colonising areas new to the species, is a positive one. It means that, despite everything that we as a species, throw at her, Mother Nature - given half a chance - will always repair herself...



# OBITUARY

## **JIM CRONIN**

**15th November 1951- 17th  
March 2007**

Jim Cronin was best known as a campaigner for primate welfare, and the founder of the Monkey World animal sanctuary in Dorset. He was born in the United States of America and spent his early life in New York state, where he had a succession of jobs, including lift engineer and removal-man, until an accident involving a piano which resulted in him having to have his leg put in traction.

After he recovered, Cronin took a job looking after the primates in the Bronx Zoo, and this set him on course for his life-long love of the animals. He moved to the United Kingdom in 1980, where he took up a job at Howlett's Wild Animal Park in Canterbury under John Aspinall. Aspinall and Cronin were among the first keepers to keep gorillas in large family groups and cover floors in thick hay rather than the regularly disinfected, and easily

cleanable, concrete floors that were the norm inside primate enclosures at the time. This more natural approach met with great success, and was soon adopted by the majority of zoos in the U.K. and around the world. After seven years at Howlett's, Cronin bought an old pig farm in Dorset, and set about a crusade to free chimpanzees from cruel treatment at the hands of Spanish beach photographers. The pig farm became his animal sanctuary, where he housed the rescued chimps, and was later to become Monkey World, which was helpful in funding and publicising his future campaigns in countrys like Turkey and Taiwan, and lobbying the British government over the illegal trade in primates.

He met Alison Aimes in 1993. She had studied biological anthropology in Cambridge, when she visited Monkey World to discuss fencing. The couple married in 1996. He received the MBE in 2006. Jim Cronin died of liver cancer at the age of 55 on the 17th March.





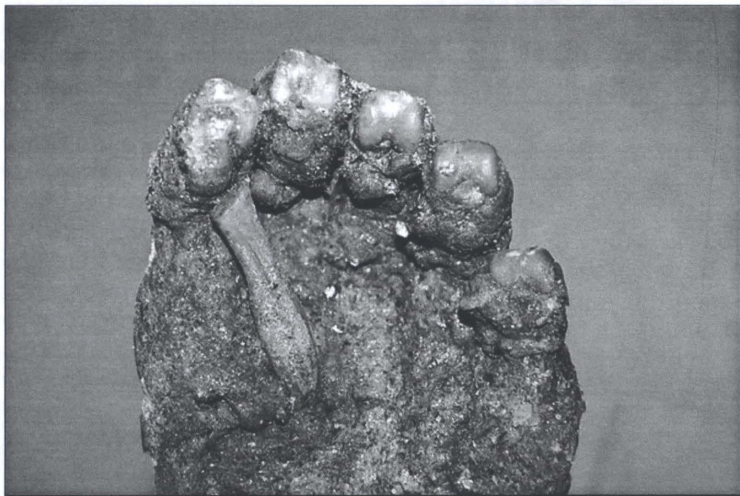
# BIGFOOT NOTEBOOK

Paul Vella



## One Foot in the Landfill

Earlier this year, when an odd-looking foot turned up in a Washington DC landfill site, police investigators were quick to rule out 'human' as the origin. The media naturally turned their attention to speculation that it was a Bigfoot foot.



Almost every member of the Bigfoot community I spoke to said 'skinned bear foot', including me. It wasn't an issue, but the story was soon circulated and made its way into the *Wisconsin Journal-Times*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Seattle Times*, the *Tacoma News-Tribune*, the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, the *Contra Costa Times*, and the *Concord Monitor* to name the few of which I am aware.

The story, of course, quotes the inimitable Tom Biscardi, who seems to be the 'rent-a-Bigfoot-quote' as far as the media is concerned these days. Despite his attempts last year to con

people into paying for pay-per-view webcasts of his Bigfoot expeditions, the newspaper articles do little but



# ANIMALS & MEN - ISSUE 41

promote the idea that the entire community is betting on Bigfoot.

It wasn't, of course, and a couple of weeks later, scientists confirmed what we had been saying all along, but it is frustrating that we get this media circus every so often, who set out to ridicule.

Incidentally, this was the second time in a couple of months that a 'non-human' foot had been found. In December, a foot was 'left' at a gas pump in a filling station - I'd take a

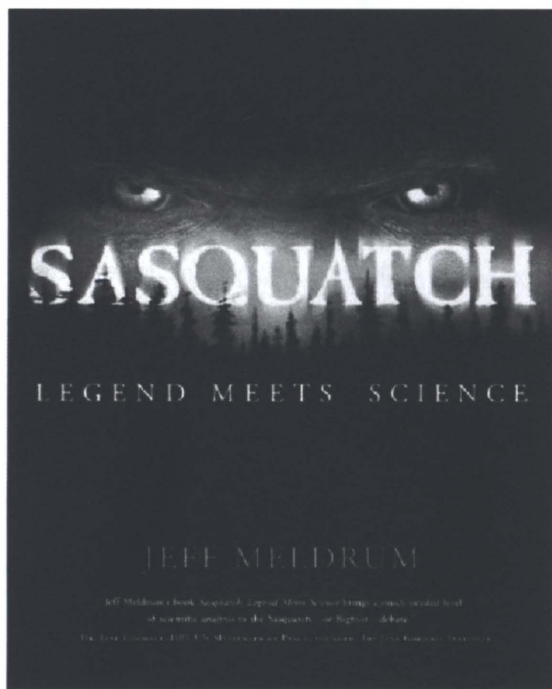
bet that was a bear too, but the media hasn't followed up on the story. Perhaps the media just doesn't find it interesting without Bigfoot.

## Book Review

Professor Jeff Meldrum's *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science* book finally made it into print. I'll keep this review short and simply say: Well Done! This is *the* book to have on your bookshelf, and is the best book on the subject since John Green's *Sasquatch: The Apes Among Us*.

Meldrum has come under a lot of criticism from his peers at Idaho State University, where he teaches Anthropology, but even his distracters would have to agree that this is a well researched and written book.

If you have any news for this section of the journal, or if you are interested in getting more involved with the CFZ BHM Study Group, please contact Paul directly on [paul@vella.co.uk](mailto:paul@vella.co.uk)







# MYSTERY CATS DIARY

## THIS IS WHERE IT GETS WEIRD...

Nearly ten years ago, my old friend Nigel Wright and I collaborated on a book called *The Rising of the Moon*. In it he quoted a rhyme that his mother had once told him:

*"A wise old owl sat in an oak,  
The more he heard, the less he spoke;  
The less he spoke, the more he heard;  
Why aren't we all like that wise old bird?"*

Nigel quoted the poem whilst relating the cautionary tale of how he was bamboozled by a group of students who had made a crop circle, and concluded. *"Evidently I am no wise owl"*.

As events have transpired, evidently, neither am I!

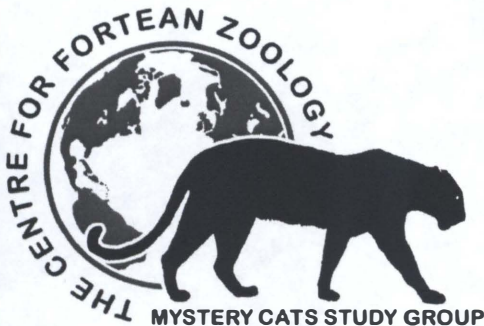
In March, Corinna and I, together with Oli and Mark from the CFZ Permanent Directorate spent the weekend in Hull for the first annual conference by the Big Cats

in Britain group.

Last year, we attended another big cat conference in the East Midlands, organised by Merrily Harpur to launch her long awaited book on the subject. As events transpired poor Merrily was ill, and yours truly had to take over the helm. It was enjoyable enough, and I met up with several old friends, and met some new ones, but the events of last year faded into insignificance besides the events of this year's conference.

This was a far more cohesive affair, with an impressive list of speakers, (although, as I was one of them, I should not - perhaps - dwell on that subject for too long, for fear that I shall be accused of blowing my own trumpet unduly).

At every conference that I have ever attended, the most important work takes





place in the bar, usually late at night. Although I could well claim that this is why I am to be found in the bar late at night at most conferences, but that would be crass, and although I have the word 'CRASS' emblazoned upon the T Shirt I am wearing,

that is another story entirely!

Late on Friday night, Corinna and I were sitting at a table in one of the darkest corners of the bar. We were talking to Di Francis, the one-time doyenne of British Big Cat research, who for various reasons had slipped beneath the radar in recent years. We had never met, and, while we talked away amicably, I was rather uncomfortably aware that - over the years - I have maligned her in print on a number of occasions. Her thesis, first set out in a book called *Cat Country* in 1983, is that there is an indigenous species of British big cat, that - at the moment - is unrecognised by science.

I will make no pretence. I have always thought that this theory was palpable nonsense. After all, Britain is one of the best-explored countries in the world, and its wildlife has been thoroughly mapped and codified over the years. For about a hundred years, from the mid-19th Century, Natural History was the most popular pastime for Britons of all ages. Generations of children - and adults for that matter - collected bird's eggs, butterflies, pressed flowers, ferns, and shot everything that moved, so the desiccated corpses could be preserved in home museums. Although new species of invertebrate are discovered occasionally in the British Isles, surely no species of indigenous vertebrate could possibly have escaped our notice?

Well, quite possibly not! About fifteen years ago, I wrote a paper that was eventually published in *Animals & Men*, which suggested that the European green lizard was a hitherto undiscovered British resident. In 2003 a colony of the western



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green lizard (*Lacerta bilineata*) was discovered in Dorset, the Pool Frog (*Rana lessonae*) was discovered to have been a British native (they are probably all extinct now), and it has also been suggested that the wall lizard (*Podarcis muralis*) and the European tree frog (*Hyla arborea*) are also natives. Whereas these assertions (with the exception of the pool frog, are still controversial, they certainly give one food for thought. (OK I admit that publishing an article called 'I Told U So' in the now defunct *Reptile World* magazine was probably not the most tactful thing I could do, but I have not always been noted for my tact).

So why did I still think that the idea of an indigenous species of British big cat was such a bloody stupid idea?

Firstly, because of its sheer size. The animals described above, fascinating though they are, are still relatively small in size. I considered that the idea of a puma-sized animal having roamed the British Isles since the year dot was so unlikely to be practically impossible.

Secondly, most of the available evidence suggested that the big cats roaming our countryside were of known species - mostly pumas and melanistic leopards. The fact that I saw a puma crossing the road in front of me on Bodmin Moor in 1997 merely confirmed me in this belief. Yes, I was aware that there were sightings of animals that really didn't fit in to such a model, but behaving much like the mainstream scientists that I have made a career out of baiting, I conveniently decided to ignore them. The strange looking animals that looked more like mastiffs than cats were, I

believed, just dogs, and the accounts of two animals of different colours being seen together were purely incidences of released pets "sticking together" as they were familiar with each other from their days in captivity.

Thirdly, because of the lack of historic accounts of livestock predation. The British big cat phenomenon first took centre stage in the eyes of the media as a result of sheep kills. Ironically, although I had written as early as 1990 that I believed that the vast majority of these killings were the work of dogs, I contradicted myself when considering the lack of historical killings to be important evidence against the existence of a British big cat.

Then, late one Friday night in a boozer in Kingston upon Hull, it all changed. Now, before we go any further, I want to make a couple of things clear:

1. I still believe that there are o-o-p pumas and panthers in the British countryside, and furthermore I still believe that they got there as a result of escapees from badly run unlicensed zoos, and from pets released in the wake of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act.
2. I still believe that the vast majority of 'big cat' pictures, reputedly snapped in the British countryside, are merely large domestic moggies.

However, I now believe that Di Francis' hypothesis regarding an indigenous species of British big cat, should be taken seriously, and that it would be unscientific (and grossly unfair) not to do so.

Why?



Pictures taken by a camera trap in Argyllshire earlier this year. These photographs which are reprinted courtesy Shaun Stevens and the BCIB appear to show a medium sized cat with a remarkably pug-like face... No further reproduction of the image will be allowed without Shaun's express permission.



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I'm getting to that bit. So let's get back to the table in the dingy bar where Corinna, Di Francis and I were sitting with Mark North and Mark Fraser (founder of the BCIB group). We were sitting around making small talk when Jonathan McGowan and Darren Naish joined us.

I was quite surprised, therefore, when, as Di was talking, they started to giggle and nudge each other like naughty schoolboys. This was no way to treat someone even if you didn't believe in her hypothesis, I thought. But it was soon obvious that something else was afoot. Di was telling us about her hypothesis for the British big cat, and how her researches had led her to the following conclusions:

1. The species was sexually dimorphic.
2. The females were lighter in colour whilst the males had heavy, muscular, shoulders unlike those of any other car species.
3. The males were darker, and appeared to be more doglike than catlike in some respects.
4. Both sexes had strange foreshortened faces.
5. The animals were solitary except for mating.
6. The females moved their young each day to a new den, never staying in the same place once.

Di then got out a laminated print of a watercolour painting that she had done; a sort of identikit picture based on years of eyewitness statements. She passed it around, and Jonathan and Darren started to giggle even more. This was too much, and I was just about to glare disapprovingly, when Jonathan produced a photo album.

Now, Jonathan is a wildlife photographer par excellence and his pictures are a joy to look at.

"*Look at this,*" he said with a grin, and passed us a particularly unattractive photograph of a very dead animal. (See p.21)

To me, at least, the similarity between Di's painting and Jonathan's photograph is marked. The images have not been tampered with (except to flip them to the same orientation), and I wonder how many of you agree with me.

The photograph is of an animal found dead outside Bovington Tank Museum in Dorset. For a number of perfectly valid reasons (all of which earned him a good ribbing by the nasty sods of the big cat research community, including yours truly), he was unable to take the corpse home, and as he thought it was probably a dead dog anyway, he wasn't too disappointed when upon his return, the carcass had vanished.

Di also showed us some photographs that we are not at liberty to discuss at the moment, but sufficient to say, that if all the calculations which have been given are correct, they provide even more compelling evidence for the existence of an indigenous species of British big cat.

So, whether or not Di has been right for all these years, I have been wrong for not displaying the scientific open mindedness that I have condemned so many others for not displaying. So, I guess Nigel's mum was right, and we should all seek to emulate that wise old strigiform. JD



# AQUATIC MONSTERS LOG BOOK

BY OLL LEWIS



## ***"My dentist's name is James Spalding"***

This summer's sightings of the Loch Ness monster have continued with several sightings of something in the

loch's waters.

On the 27th March this year, holiday-makers Sidney and Janet Wilson decided to take a pleasure cruise along the loch. As the Wilsons neared Urquhart Castle, two speedboats appeared and their pilots decided to show off a little to the holiday-makers by circling the cruise boat at speed. Suitably impressed, Sidney Wilson decided to snap a few photos of the boats and their wakes. It wasn't until he examined the pictures later that he noticed something on one photograph that didn't seem to look like a wake at all. When he enlarged one of the wakes to get a better view of it, he saw what looked like a head and a fin above the surface of the water near to the wake.

The Loch Ness Monster popped up yet again at the end of May. On the 25th,



a 55 year old lab technician called Gordon Holmes saw and filmed a 4-5ft creature lolloping in the loch. This sighting may well have been an otter or an eel, but received a disproportionately large amount of coverage in the press, because some journalists misheard Holmes' estimate of the creature's size, believing he had filmed a 45ft animal rather than a "four to five foot" animal.

## ***"He'll make a great 'submarine-er' some day"***

In May, as part of a publicity stunt to promote shoebox-sized submarine cameras, an Aberdeen-based company called Buccaneer decided to use them to 'hunt' for the Loch Ness monster for a few days. Fifteen shoebox sub-cams, called VideoRays, were launched into the loch over a period of two days to beam back live pictures from underwater to a bank of monitor screens. As well as looking for Nessie in a 50m<sup>2</sup> area of the loch, the company hoped to find more parts of the Wellington bomber raised from the loch in the 1980s.

From press releases, it seemed that the company's manager was genuinely excited by what he might find in the loch during his two day investigation, and he hoped that science would



benefit from the event too. It is, then, probably a shame that they decided to use the cameras in Loch Ness, where the visibility is extremely poor, and that they found nothing.

Better luck was had earlier in May by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, when - during a sonar survey of the loch bed's geology - a common toad (*Bufo bufo*) was found happily scampering around at a depth of 98m (324ft).

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***“There is great genius behind all this.”***



On the 20th February, fishermen found what looked like a gelatinous mush floating off Key West, Florida, USA. Thinking that it was an interesting find; after all, floating blobby masses are not found every day, they took it aboard their boat, and packed it in ice for scientists to take a look at it.

It turned out that the blobby mass was the 73cm (2½ft) long remains of a 7.3m (24ft) long squid of the species *Asperoteuthis acanthoderma*, a squid sometimes confused with the giant squid, *Architeuthis dux*. *A. acanthoderma* has only ever previously been found in deep water in the Pacific Ocean, from the Sulawesi Sea to the

islands of Hawaii, so experts are baffled as to how it came to be in the shallow waters of the Florida Keys with the continents of North and South America in its way.

The out-of-place squid is likely to be donated to the Smithsonian Institute, when scientists at the Mote Marine Laboratory have finished their autopsies of the organism.

***“The spice must flow.”***

In April, underwater cameraman Jay Garbose filmed what looked like a sea cucumber off the Florida coast, near Juno Beach. It wasn't until it started moving that he realised he had chanced upon something more remarkable. The creature appears to be a 3m (10ft) grey nematode worm.





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Garbose has filmed documentary footage for *National Geographic* and *The Discovery Channel*, and his six minute long video of the worm is remarkably clear. The film was submitted to experts at the Smithsonian Institute who were "puzzled by some of the worm's characteristics," and believe that this may be a newly discovered species. The video can be viewed here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wST01hAmbRA>.



## ***"From Hell's heart I stab at thee!"***

News reports have surfaced from Guinea of a sea monster washing up on a beach there in April or May. The reports do not give the exact location or name of the beach, but provide photographs and a description. The description reads:



*"The partially decomposed monster has four paws, a tail and long fur."* The article also states that scientists have looked at the animal, and have no idea what it could be. Locals also

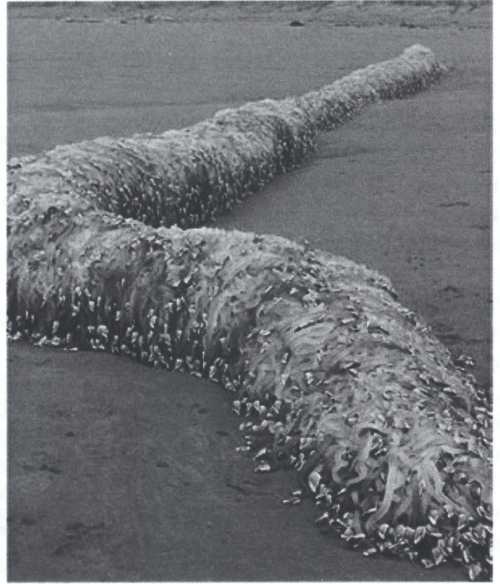
say that these things tend to wash up on the beach every so often.

Looking at the photographs, I would hazard a guess that the scientists mentioned were probably not biologists, because at least one of the photographs clearly shows a humpbacked whale's cranium with the flesh splaying off it, meaning the animal is most likely just a partially decayed whale rather than any unidentified gigantic hairy, four-pawed, betailled beast of the sea.

The supposed hairy appearance occurs when whale blubber decomposes and similarly when the whale's fins start to decompose, the remains can look like paws or feet.

## ***"I gave you Silly Putty once for Christmas."***

In June, visitors to Wakanae Beach in New Zealand, spotted what looked like a 14m (4.6ft) tentacle rising from the sand.



The surface of the 'tentacle' was completely covered in 30cm (2ft) long pink tubes, which appeared to be capped with shells.

It wasn't, in fact, a tentacle, but a large length of rope that had become completely covered by gooseneck barnacles (*Lepas anatifera*).

Gooseneck barnacles recieved their common name after Gerald of Wales popularised the tale that they were the young of the barnacle goose, and would change into the adults in a similar manner to frogs developing from tadpoles.

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## ***“Don’t tell him, Pike!”***

A boy in Israel had quite a surprise when fishing on the 25th June; he caught a fish that looked like an alligator. The fish, the alligator gar-pike (*Atractosteus spatula*), is a North American species that can grow to lengths of 3m (10ft), and as this is the first time it has been found in the Middle East, naturalists are understandably concerned. The gar-pike is a very efficient hunter, so if there are more of them in Israel's rivers and lakes, and they establish a breeding population, they could decimate the local fish populations.

Another gar-pike was found in February in Jakarta, Indonesia, after heavy flooding, and measured 45cm (1.5ft).



## ***“Look how he glares at me...”***

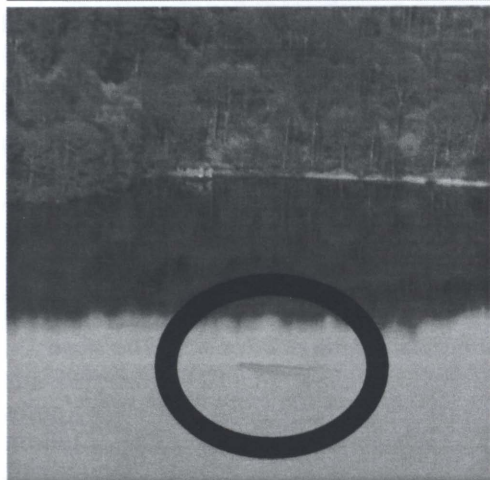
At around 2pm on 8th July, a couple from Trondheim in Norway, were diving past Lake Gagnasvatnet, with their child and a friend, when they caught sight of what appeared to be a head and large neck popping out of the waters.

According to Erik Knatterud, to whom the couple reported the sighting, the creature's head was smaller than a rugby ball, and tapered to the snout. What the couple assumed was the animal's neck protruded around 30cm (1ft) from the water. When the couple saw the creature, they were so surprised that they swerved their car. But the creature seemed uninterested in the commotion, and kept staring in the direction the car had come from. Traffic on the road at the time forced the family to continue in the direction they had been travelling, and by the time they were able to turn the car around, the creature had gone.



# EEL OF FORTUNE

When we started the 'Big Fish Project' in 1999, we had no idea that it would become the most important project that we have ever carried out....



## RETURN TO CONISTON

Jon Downes

In mid-June, the CFZ returned to the Lake District for phase two of our ongoing investigation into reports of giant eels. The intervening months since our first visit in October had been particularly interesting ones. In February, photographer Linden

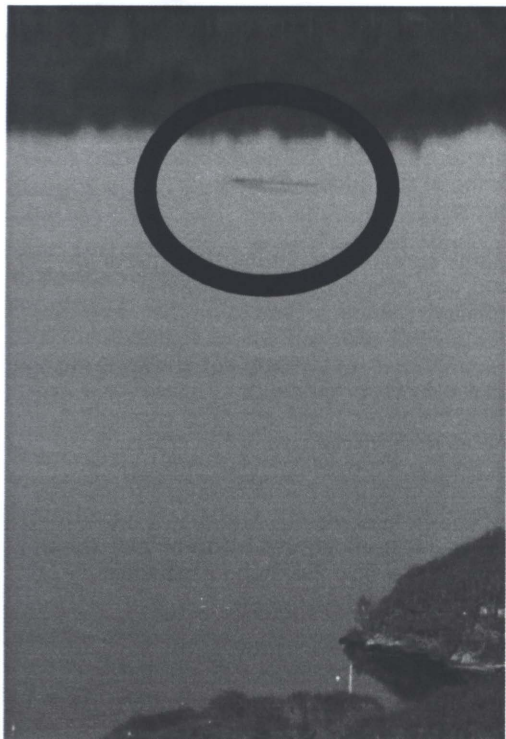
Adams took a series of photographs of what appears to be a large animate object swimming in the middle of Lake Windermere.

Mr. Adams contacted a number of experts in the field, including us, and the general consensus of opinion seems to be that the pictures are not only genuine, but show a large animal that is currently not known in the Lake District, or indeed the United Kingdom. However, there are differences of opinion as regards the size of the creature (if indeed it is a creature). Our calculations would suggest that between 12 and 15 feet of the "animal" are visible, and that it is moving at a fast enough speed to be able to generate both a bow wave and a sizeable wake.

Dr. Charles Paxton, the ichthyological consultant for the CFZ made the following statement, which is published on Linden Adams' website:

*"I am a professional fish biologist who has studied and observed the fauna of Windermere (e.g. Paxton et al. 2004). I also take an interest in analysing reports of unknown aquatic animals (see Paxton et al. 2005, Paxton and Holland 2005) and I am writing a book on the subject.*

*Having seen the photos and considered the reports from the two witnesses, my opinion is that one or more animals was/were seen that produced a large wake. The animal identification is based on the appearance of the disturbances at the water (wakes and the circular pattern) and that the object(s)*



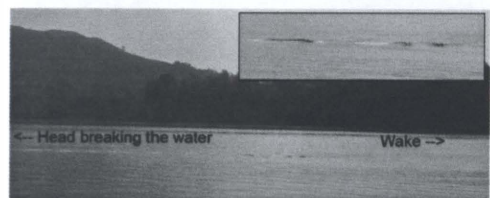
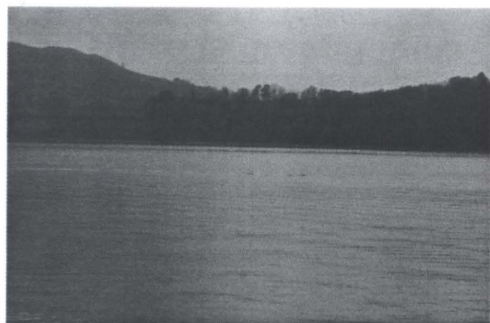
*I also have not the competence to distinguish in the image between the wake and the animal causing the wake therefore I cannot determine relative size. The close ups I have seen of wake indicate a darker more solid area at the apex of the wake. Again I am not in a position to say whether that represents the source of the wake or the strongest initial waves of the wake. Assuming the darker area is the body of the animal that made the wake, does not allow ready identification of the taxonomic affinities of the animal(s) as no diagnostic features are seen even in close up, although a protrusion is visible.*

*was/were seen to submerge.*

*The wake is very large compared to other objects photographed at the time and in other photographs taken by one of the witnesses. Small animals can produce large wakes and large animals can produce large wakes but I have no competence to judge the absolute size of the animal from the wakes. I have no memory of ever seeing a fish on Windermere cause a prominent v-shaped wake. Nor were it a swimming deer (which can cause a v-shaped wake) would it be likely to submerge.*

*The classification of the animal(s) seen as anomalous relies on the estimate of size. As I state above I have not the professional competency to estimate the size. \*IF\* it is assumed the dark region represents the source of the wake rather than the wake proper and that this can be reliably estimated to be in excess of 2m then it would not represent any species that is part of the known fauna of the lake. However this conclusion would rely on the accuracy of the size estimate of the darker region and an assumption the dark region was distinct and not part of the wake."*

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In April, we received the following letter:

*'Dear Richard,*

*It was nice talking to you today. As mentioned my wife and I had an unusual experience this past weekend at Lake Windermere and we didn't really know who to turn to try and get some explanation. Someone mentioned your website to me so that is how I found you. I have never had anything akin to such an odd sighting, and being aware of how sceptical people are when hearing such a story, I wanted to make sure that there is some logical explanation for what we observed.*

*Just to recap, we were visiting Windermere this weekend and staying at the Langdale Lodge (Langdale Lodge Bridge Lane, Troutbeck, Windermere, Cumbria LA23) on the edge of the Lake. Having just arrived*

*on Friday 20th April 2007 went down to the lakeside to admire the scenery. The afternoon was still and the water was particularly calm. At about 16h15 we suddenly became aware of small waves from a wake lapping onto the shore and checked to see if there was a boat nearby. There were no boats nearby to cause a wake but we did notice a large object below the water about 15 meters out moving north to south at a speed of about 10mph. This appeared to be the source of the wake we had observed. It did not fully surface but part of the object like 2 small humps in the middle of the creature appeared just above the surface. I can only say it looked like a giant water snake or eel. I had my son's DSLR camera with me and managed to get a few shots. On examination of the photos it does appear what we witnessed was a very large unknown creature. We reported our sighting to the hotel and the receptionist confirmed that there was a report in the local newspaper of a very similar sighting.*

*Attached is one of the better photo's I managed to get. My son did the annotation on one of the photos.*

*Yours sincerely*

*John Harker'*

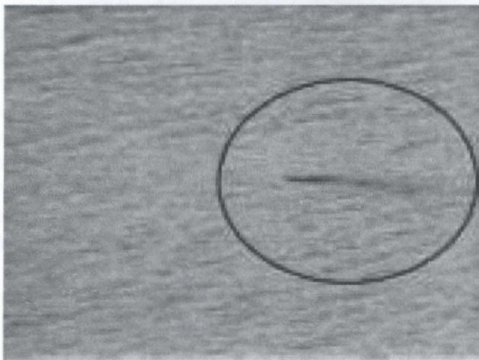
Then, in May, the plot thickened. An amateur scientist called Gordon Holmes took a videotape of something that looked remarkably similar to the images captured by Linden Adams. There is some confusion, however, as to exactly how big the creature that he caught on video in the murky waters of Loch Ness, on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2007, actually is.



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Some reports suggest that it was 45 feet in length, whereas most claim "four to five" feet in length. The fact that Mr. Holmes has a very broad Yorkshire accent, and his diction is not the easiest to understand, only serves to confuse the matter. We have made attempts to contact Mr. Holmes, but to no avail. However, in the weeks following the release of his videotape, Holmes has made some extraordinary claims involving, not only the Loch Ness monster, but big cats (something which we can accept) and 'the wee folk' (something which we think should be taken *cum grano salis*). However, we print stills from his video here, alongside Linden Adams' images, which are used with kind permission of Mr. Adams.

There have been a number of other sightings this year, on Loch Ness, and at least one other set of photographs has allegedly been taken although we have not, as yet, seen them for ourselves, and so we are not prepared to comment further. However, as you can see, it was a particularly interesting springtime for those of us interested in the subject of eels - giant or otherwise - and so we headed north with high hopes. I will leave it to my better half, the first lady of the CFZ, to describe the events of the trip in her own inimitable style.



## THE NEARLY-AS-FAMOUS FIVE GO FISHING Corinna Downes

Despite meaning to retire early, interventions from work, and such like, ensured that this plan went flapping its way out of the window and we found ourselves not getting to sleep until gone 1.00 am. However, intrepid as we all are, we were still all up at 4.00 Friday morning, bundled, albeit slightly sleepily, into the car, and on the road by just before 5.00 am on our way up to the Lake District. It was very pleasant to drive on such deserted roads at that time in the morning, although for only brief a time along the 'Atlantic Highway'. By the time we hit the M5, the early morning traffic had begun to build up and we found ourselves surrounded, primarily – and somewhat eerily – on all sides by the infamous, and well documented, white vans of various shapes and sizes.

The weather was fine until we hit the Black Country. True to its unfortunate sounding, rather dreary, description (and I mean no



offence to anyone who may live there) the skies darkened, the rain fell unrelentingly, and the wind began to rock the car as we sped along the motorway. By the time we reached Windermere, it was more like autumn rather than nearly at the summer solstice. However, when we reached our rendezvous point with Lisa (Dowley) at the Bluebird Café, on the shores of Coniston Water, the skies began to clear and the wind dropped, almost as suddenly as it had started.

It was, of course, on Coniston Water that Donald Malcolm Campbell's ill-fated attempt at bettering his own water speed record of 276.33 mph took place. It was 4th January 1967, and Campbell was nearing the end of his second run in Bluebird, when she flipped high into the air and nose-dived into the water. Rescuers who raced to the spot found only Campbell's helmet, shoes, oxygen mask, and his Teddy bear mascot, Mr. Woppit, bobbing on the water. It was not until 28th May 2001 that Donald Campbell's body was recovered from the waters and laid to rest in Coniston cemetery, in September of that year.



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As I have said, we had arranged to meet Lisa at the Bluebird Café – named, of course, after Donald Campbell's boat - and we arrived there at 12.30 pm, seven and a half hours (and a few coffee breaks and calls of Mother Nature) after leaving sunny Woolsery. There has been a café building on the site since the Furness Railway Company built it in 1860 after the rail network was brought to Coniston. Its purpose then was to act as accommodation for the crew of the original SY Gondola which travelled up and down the lake in Victorian days. Now you will find the café is full of Bluebird memorabilia, and boasts a beautiful spot on the shores of the lake.

After a much-needed cup of tea, whopping great big slabs of fruit cake, and then a spot of filming, we all regrouped at Low Peel Near, where we had been based last year, to wait for the arrival of our diver Kevin, and his brother-in-law, Ken.

If any of you reading this has ever been to the Lake District, you will know about the long, narrow winding lanes that take you across the wild countryside. In places, these roads are not for the fainthearted as

the bends are sharp, with sheer drops into the lakes banking them, separated only by low man-made walls of stone. In the remoter parts the lanes become single lane traffic only, and it took us three attempts to get around one particular corner, due to the need of having to reverse every time we ventured our noses around the bend, as we kept meeting oncoming traffic. There is something oddly claustrophobic about these lanes – I think it is because the stone walls seem to close them in. You may say that lanes in Devon cause the same feeling, but, to me at least, although the lanes here are sunken, they are banked by high hedges, and do not cause the same kind of insecurities.

We all spent a good few hours exploring the area. Jon, Richard, Oll and Kevin did a spot of kick-stand testing and turned over stones in the water to see if anything of interest rushed out – they caught a few minnows and interesting beetles, but, alas no sign of any eels.

Jon and I arranged to meet everyone again on Sunday before we left the others at Low Peel Near at around 6.30 pm to make our







way back down the motorway and into Lytham St. Annes for the annual LAPIS conference, where Jon was speaking.

After returning, as planned, around lunchtime, we spent the rest of Sunday at the shores of Coniston Water. Towards dusk we were witness to a mass hatching of mayflies which burst forth from the, by then, calm water into the still evening air to act out their last few hours of life.

A family of ducks had kept us company for most of the afternoon – they seemed to like the remnants of various sandwiches and pork pies that we tossed in their direction and hung around eagerly awaiting further dietary supplements. Later on we also had a visit from a common merganser (*Mergus merganser*) mother - a large sized duck - and her four offspring. The little ones were charging through the water, their heads just under the surface, lapping up the fry that had congregated near the shoreline. I think everyone present all went "Ahhh how cute" when we saw two of the little ones jump on to mum's back for a lift. We also saw her, on two occasions, at great speed racing

after, and catching, two perch that she swallowed with relish. We were all of the same opinion: "How is it that we spend all afternoon trying to catch one perch and she manages to catch two in the space of about five minutes?" C'est la vie ... Sigh.

No, we did not catch any eels either. But we did see several. We also got bitten to buggery by the midges, but that is what it is all about isn't it? Getting out there and experiencing the ups and downs rather than sitting in a chair talking about it. If nothing else, here at the CFZ we pride ourselves with doing just that - getting stuck in – cuts, bruises, bites, wet feet and all. Even Kevin entered into the spirit of things – albeit slightly by misfortune! He managed to slip on a rock and fell, fully clothed, into the lake at one point, but true to CFZ form, got up, shook himself down and carried on as if nothing had happened.

By the time we got back to our board and lodgings for the night, all the eateries had closed so Oll, Jon and I had a 'picnic' in our room which consisted of left over pork pies, crisps, tuna salad and chocolate – oh yes ... lots of chocolate! Well, it's good for



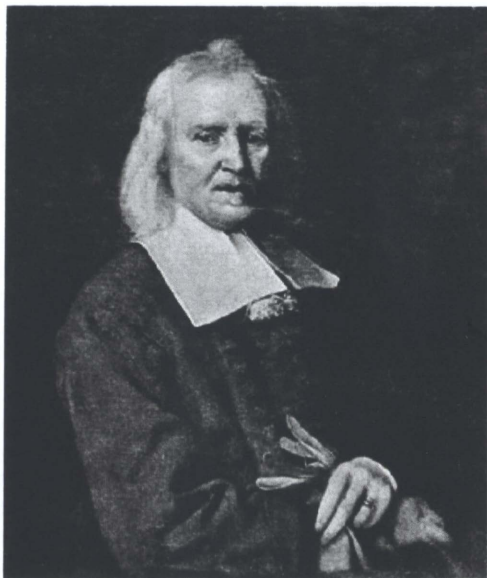
you – or so Jon keeps trying to convince me. He even claims it is therapeutic for his diabetes! Yeah, right Jon – you may like to think that.

We eventually reached the comforts of home at around 10.45 pm after a very long drive, exacerbated by a hold-up due to an accident (not ours!) on the M6/M5 junction which cost us around three-quarters of an hour.

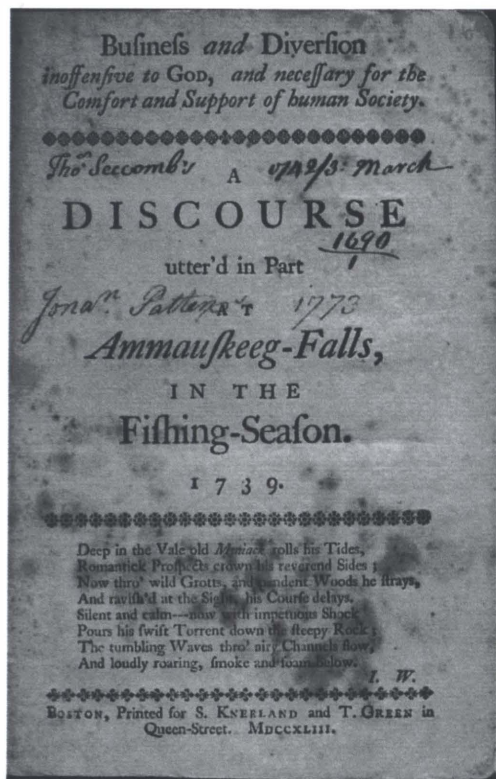
In my main capacity for the trip as driver for the CFZ headquarters here in Devon, I clocked up nigh on 950 miles over the four days we were away so come Tuesday morning I was hesitant to arise from my bed. I did so around lunchtime, but found myself spending the rest of the day staring aimlessly out of the window and trying to get my body to function – without much success. I probably even slept in the driving position!

## EXCERPT FROM `THE COMPLEAT ANGLER` BY ISAAK WALTON (1653)

Izaak Walton (August 9, 1593 - December 15, 1683) was an English writer and author of *The Compleat Angler*. The last forty years of his long life seem to have been spent in ideal leisure and occupation, the old man travelling here and there, visiting eminent clergymen and others who enjoyed fishing, compiling the biographies of congenial spirits, and collecting here a little and there a little for the enlargement of his famous treatise. There is hardly a name in English literature whose immortality is more secure, or whose personality is the subject of a more devoted cult.



And others say, that Eeles growing old, breed other Eeles out of the corruption of their own age, which Sir Francis Bacon sayes, exceeds not ten years. And others say, that Eeles are bred of a particular dew falling in the Months of May or June on the banks of some particular Ponds or Rivers (apted by nature for that end) which in a few dayes is by the Suns heat turned into Eeles. I have seen in the beginning of July, in a River not far from Canterbury, some parts of it covered over with young Eeles about the thickness of a straw; and these Eeles did lye on the top of that water, as thick as motes are said to be in the Sun; and I have heard the like of other Rivers, as namely, in Severn, and in a pond or Mere in Stafford-shire, where about a set time in Summer, such small Eeles abound so much, that many of the poorer sort of people, that inhabit near to it, take



such Eeles out of this Mere, with ſieves or ſheets, and make a kind of Eele-cake of them, and eat it like as bread. And Geſner quotes venerable Bede to ſay, that in England there is an Iland called Ely, by reaſon of the innumerable number of Eeles that breed in it.

But that Eeles may be bred as ſome worms and ſome kind of Bees and Waſps are, either of dew, or out of the corruption of the earth, ſeems to be made probable by the Barnacles and young

Goslings bred by the Suns heat and the rotten planks of an old Ship, and hatched of trees, both which are related for truths by Dubartas, and our learned Cambden, and laborious Gerrard in his Herball.

It is ſaid by Randelitius, that thoſe Eeles\_ that are bred in Rivers, that relate to, or be neer to the Sea, never return to the freſh waters (as the Salmon does alwaies deſire to do) when they have once taſted the ſalt water; and I do the more eaſily believe this, becauſe I am certain that powdered Bief is a moſt excellent bait to catch an Eele: and S<sup>r</sup>. Francis Bacon will allow the Eeles life to be but ten years; yet he in his Hiſtory of Life and Death, mentions a Lamprey, belonging to the Roman Emperor, to be made tame, and ſo kept for almoſt three ſcore yeers; and that ſuch uſeful and pleaſant obſervations were made of this Lamprey, that Crassus the Oratour (who kept her) lamented her death.

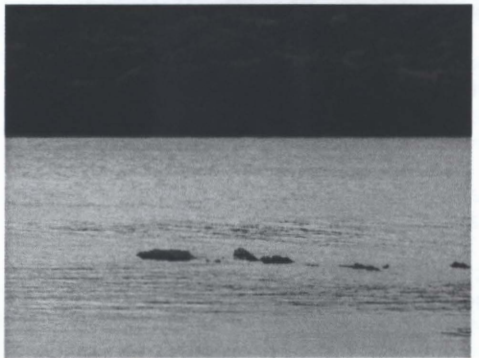
It is granted by all, or moſt men, that Eeles, for about ſix months (that is to ſay, the ſix cold months of the year) ſtir not up and down, neither in the Rivers nor the Pools in which they are, but get into the ſoft earth or mud, and there many of them together bed themſelves, and live without feeding upon any thing (as I have told you ſome Swallows have been obſerved to do in hollow trees for thoſe ſix cold months); and this the Eele and Swallow do, as not being able to endure winter weather; for Geſner quotes Albertus to ſay, that in the year 1125 (that years winter being more cold then uſual) Eeles did by natures inſtinct get out of the water into a ſtack of hay in a Meadow upon dry ground, and there bedded themſelves, but yet at laſt



died there. I shall say no more of the Eele, but that, as it is observed, he is impatient of cold, so it has been observed, that in warm weather an Eele has been known to live five days out of the water. And lastly, let me tell you, that some curious searchers into the natures of fish, observe that there be several sorts or kinds of Eeles, as the Silver-Eele, and green or greenish Eel (with which the River of Thames abounds, and are called Gregs); and a blackish Eele, whose head is more flat and bigger then ordinary Eeles; and also an Eele whose fins are redish, and but seldome taken in this Nation (and yet taken sometimes): These several kinds of Eeles, are (say some) diversly bred; as namely, out of the corruption of the earth, and by dew, and other wayes (as I have said to you:) and yet it is affirmed by some, that for a certain, the Silver-Eele breeds by generation, but not by Spawning as other fish do, but that her Brood come alive from her no bigger nor longer then a pin, and I have had too many testimonies of this to doubt the truth of it.

## WIDER WAKES Richard Freeman

We had planned to observe boat wake on the lake to look at their formation, to see how long they lasted after the vessel that made them had vanished out of site, and to time how long they took to reach the bank. In deep side lakes like Loch Ness, it is known that boat wakes can actually hit the shore and bounce back across the lake, making hump-like formations on the water.



At Windermere, there is a speed limit of ten knots. Ergo: wakes here would not be as large as on other lakes, where boats move faster. We observed a number of boats at Coniston. We found that wakes were visible for up to ten minutes after the boat that made them had gone. However, as Lisa pointed out, without an anemometer to measure wind speed and direction, no valid conclusions could be made. This is going to be a definite purchase before our third trip to the lakelands.

## AND FINALLY... THE EELS

On our first trip to the Lake District in October 2006, we didn't see a single eel. On our second trip, we did a little better. Richard saw two and Kevin saw three or four. They were silver grey in colour, and well within the accepted size reference for this species. We were actually quite disappointed, because although Kevin and Richard had snorkelled pretty well solidly for two days, and Kevin did several hours of diving, not only did we not manage to come back with any decent underwater photographs, but the fish population as a whole seemed to be remarkably sparse.

Some weeks after returning, I received a coldly polite telephone call from a gentleman working in the Environment Agency. 'Did we know', he asked us, 'that we had been breaking the law by setting eel traps without a licence?' 'No', I said, 'and even in my most recklessly anti-establishment moods I would not have been stupid enough to knowingly break the law, and then release photographs - doing so to the gentlemen of Her Majesty's press'. This broke the ice, and he gave a slightly nervous, civil-servantish laugh. We talked

for a while about what we had hoped to achieve at Coniston, and he told me that, in recent years, there has been an enormous decline in the eel population.

This got me thinking.

More out curiosity than out of any other reason, some weeks before we went to Coniston I downloaded the Project Gutenberg version of Isaak Walton's seminal *The Compleat Angler*.

Walton was a consummate naturalist and his observational skills cannot be faulted. If we ignore, for the moment his assertions about barnacle geese, goose barnacles, and over-wintering swallows, most of the rest of what he says about the lifestyle of the common eel is borne out perfectly by what we know today.

However, there were one or two items of interest. Any angler will tell you that the common eel (*A. anguilla*) has two main physical morphs. Although they are the same species, some eels develop pointy noses; these fish feed on worms and other invertebrates. However, other eels develop a blunt facial aspect, and these eels feed predominately on other fish. These two physical morphs have been known for well over a century, but it is interesting to find that Isaak Walton does not mention them.

But, he *does* mention several other morphs; one with a flat head much bigger than that of an ordinary eel, and one with reddish coloured fins. It is irresistibly tempting to deduce from this, that the two currently observed morphs of the common eel are relatively recent occurrences. Walton's other two morphs are not, as far



as we are aware, found today.

Could it be that *Anguilla anguilla* is a very motile species? A species that produces new forms much more readily than would otherwise be assumed?

It is also interesting to note that whereas Walton remarks that eels do indeed go down to the sea, he claims that some give birth to living young in freshwater. The complicated life cycle of the European eel was only discovered in the 1920s, and the life cycle of the Japanese eel - a closely related species, *Anguilla japonica* - was only discovered within the last few years. According to accepted wisdom, the European eel mates, spawns and dies in the Sargasso Sea, located - amusingly enough - in the midst of the Bermuda Triangle. The Japanese eel, however, does exactly the same thing in the Marianas Trench near the Philippines.

It has been suggested by a number of our colleagues, that with the increasing number of land-locked stretches of water that some eels may well stay there for their entire life cycle and give birth to live young in freshwater. The comments by Walton, nearly 400 years ago, would seem to bear out this hypothesis.

For many years, it was thought that the European eel was unable to eat in

saltwater. Relatively recently, it has been found that a significant proportion of the eel population do not seem to enter freshwater at all. This is again suggestive that our theory that eels are capable of changing both their form, and their lifestyle, very quickly, would appear to be correct.

On our way back down south, after three (mostly) fruitless days eel-fishing, we stopped at Blackpool Tower Aquarium. At the Big Cats Conference in Hull last March, our old friend and compadre, Mark Martin told us that he had seen a particularly large eel - one that he estimated to be at least five feet in length in this particularly run down and unpleasant aquarium.

I don't like Blackpool. Whereas once it may well have been a magical place of delight, in many ways these days I feel that it is indicative of everything that is most wrong about British culture at the beginning of the twenty-first century.





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An old friend of mine, who had grown up in Blackpool in the 1940s, took great exception to my venomous description of the place in my autobiography. This time, I went back with an open mind, hoping that I could prove him right. Admittedly, on my first visit, it had been both the Queen's Golden Jubilee weekend, and the height of the World Cup, and the behaviour of many of the people we saw walking down the streets was just as bad as one might expect. On this occasion, the behaviour of the populace was nowhere near as appalling, and I have to say that I can see how it had a certain faded charm.



The drug addict panhandling outside the Blackpool Tower, the disabled beggar swearing sadly to himself under his breath, and the hard candy genitalia on sale to small children on a stall open to the street on the Golden Mile, however, only served to make me realise - as if any realisation was necessary - that Blackpool is hardly the place that I would wish to take my children on holiday.



The Tower Aquarium itself was a complete shambles. None of the staff knew anything about the exhibits, and the main display tank was empty, after - allegedly - all the inhabitants had been killed after an unfortunate cock-up with the water chemistry. However, there were eels. And then some ...



In one tank, there was an eel of about three foot in length, which - apparently - had been in captivity there for over thirty years. Here we have our first anomaly. The idea that eels die after 6 - 10 years has been well and truly exploded.

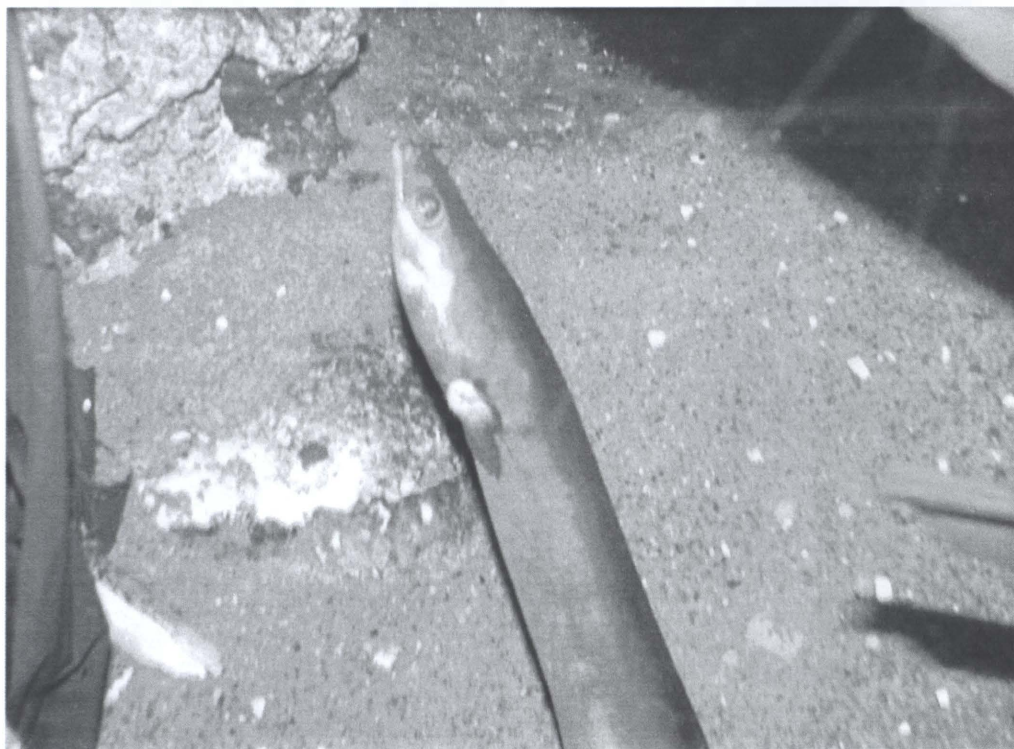
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These reports are only a work in progress. The big fish project is going to run and run and we are planning to be involved in research at the Lake District for at least the next five years. Even at this early stage, it seems certain that the biology of the European eel is not just poorly understood, but that it may have considerable surprises in store for us.

If we are correct, and *Anguila anguila* is indeed a motile species that can throw off new morphs very easily, then perhaps - as a result of the worldwide population crash throughout the species in the last few years

- a new morph is occurring; one that is far larger than any eel currently known to mankind.

Bernard Heuvelmans once wrote that "*there are lost worlds everywhere*", but to find such a lost world in Blackpool Tower Aquarium beggars belief, even in this infinitely surrealchemical universe. Five foot eels in a run-down tourist attraction, may not, as yet, provide the answer to the enduring mysteries of lake monsters across the northern hemisphere, but it is a damn good place to start!



# BLOOD ON THE TRACKS; THE LEGEND OF GOATMAN

BY NEIL ARNOLD

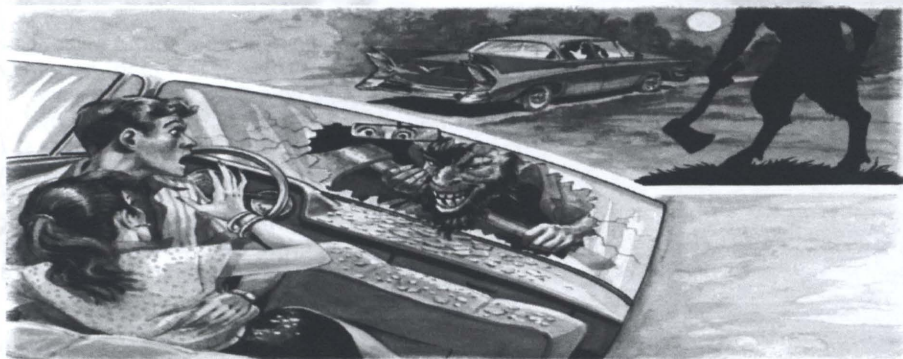
1. often Satyr Greek Mythology. A woodland creature depicted as having the pointed ears, legs, and short horns of a goat and a fondness for unrestrained revelry.
2. hairy one. Mentioned in Greek mythology as a creature composed of a man and a goat, supposed to inhabit wild and desolate regions. The Hebrew word is rendered also "goat" (Lev. 4:24) and "devil", i.e., an idol in the form of a goat (17:7; 2 Chr. 11:15). When it is said (Isa. 13:21; comp. 34:14) "the satyrs shall dance there," the meaning is that the place referred to shall become a desolate waste.

There is something out there in the woods. It's the kind of horror story that makes kids and adults alike hike into the mountains, set up a roaring campfire and tell tales, spin yarns, and chill bones.


Tonight they'll huddle around the fire in the blackness - the golden flames casting eerie shadows across their faces, embers floating into the night staring back like glowing eyes. Under a funereal moon, as the thick fog heaves in, their inner circle is protected, for their arms are locked behind one another. Not only are they keeping each other warm from the nocturnal winds, but they also believe that by forming their inner circle, they are safe. However, their host

with the most is doing his best to break their bond. His whispers and growled tones are accompanied by the token hoot of an owl, the snap of a twig, and howling wind. Even in their fear, they want this story to be true. Maybe it is. Maybe it isn't. Their parents told them about the bogeyman when they were small, but as they grew up with those fears, their parents scoffed; of course there are no monsters in the closet. They are in the woods. When film directors Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez released the low-budget movie *The Blair Witch Project* in 1999, some audiences were unnerved by the realism.

However, the general reaction was of







disappointment. They never got it. Why? Simply because they knew nothing about fear. About the unknown.

### GOATMAN IS THE UNKNOWN. BEWARE!

It is a spook story. A vague legend. It surrounds Maryland, especially Prince George's County, and also Clinton, which is inhabited by 20,000 people, and is situated twelve-miles from Washington.

This is where Goatman lives. Somewhere in the backyard of every mind. He is the local bogeyman, the unseen, the unknown wanderer that slinks through the woodlands, often sought after by many youths who set up camp in the thickets. However, because of his vagueness as a local dread, he is nothing more than a shadow, a snapping twig in the still of night. But, is there *really* more to Goatman than meets the sceptical eye ?

To many, Goatman is a very real and terrifying entity. One known to mutilate animals, sniff around property, attempting to break into homes, and attack locals. Goatman is also blamed for the killing of dogs in the local community, causing damage to abandoned vehicles which have been left in remote woodlands, bearing the marks of his striking axe, and also preying on young lovers who seek quiet lanes in order to cavort.

The rumours often revolve around the United States Agricultural Research Centre at Beltsville, Maryland. One legend suggests a maniacal scientist who worked with goats in the facility, but attempted one bizarre experiment too many, and fled into the woods as a disfigured and tormented spirit. Beltsville is situated on the outskirts of Washington's suburbs, and is rich in woodland. It is here that the yarns of Goatman's origin were born, many believing that such a creepy legend originated from the 1950s.

However, as in most cases regarding local bogeymen, locals often look to the run-down woodland shacks or old abandoned buildings in order to build their scare story. This usually revolves around some kind of local madman said to pick off teens, but exists as some kind of horrifying shadow said to lurk in those forests.

Local man Raymond Hayden, whose brother found evidence of the beast in the 1970s claimed: *"There was a man, perhaps a bit mentally disturbed and unstable who lived nearby. He was known as the Goatman, basically a nasty old man who had a double-edged axe, and he used to roam the railroad tracks. It is all a myth about the Goatman attacking cars and scaring people. This guys name was Albert, or Abel and he would mingle with the hobos who set up camps along the tracks. They were good people. Very much street people who liked wine."* (According to Greek mythology, the Satyrs passed their time wantonly with women, music and wine!).

Since the 1950s the Goatman territory has mainly been focused on the area of Bowie, Clinton and Prince George's County. Several ghost tales pertain to these isolated areas of heavy

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thicket. On the night of November 4th 1971 John Hayden (brother of Raymond) and William Gheen believed the legend of Goatman came to life when they went to search for a missing pet German Shepherd (Ginger) which belonged to April Edwards, daughter of a Mr and Mrs Lacie Daniels, with whom William had been staying at the time.

The dog had escaped from its pen on Zug Road the night before, and despite a long search the two twenty-year old men failed to uncover any evidence...until they searched the Penn Central Railroad vicinity, and discovered the severed head of the animal. They never found the body, for they believed Goatman had dragged the carcass into the nocturnal woods for a feast.

Sceptics claimed that the poor animal had simply been decapitated by a train, but for the locals this was all too good an opportunity to miss regarding beefing up the local creep yarn. Many claimed that they'd heard the screams of the Goatman at Cry-baby Bridge in Bowie, an area also known for its dark spectres said to walk and wail the isolated roads and highways that dissect the heavy woodlands. Goatman is also said to wander the Lottsford and Fletchertown roads, which flank the Glendale State Asylum, and also other haunts such as Admore-Ardwick Road. However, Goatman figures have also been sighted in the woods of Oregon, California, Okalahoma, Texas and Kentucky. The same forests that Bigfoot is said to walk. Is there a connection?

The Goatman legend has always been clouded, its folklore a rampant, ominous presence that never quite shows itself. The

legend is full of every stereotype that we relate to local bogeyman, born from high school hysteria and campfire chillology. Local kids like to tie their fears to these unknown apparitions, they love to speak of them because they are afraid of their own fears which they mould their favourite local ghost into.

However, Goatman, despite its element of vagueness, could well be more flesh and blood than we realise. When I first began looking into this zooform critter in the late 1980s, I strongly believed this man-beast was nothing more than local rumour, a classic image that shares the same cold void as Bunynman and the Jersey Devil, a sum of many parts, however, further intensive exploration may well prove that in the case of Goatman, these parts have some solidity.

If you believe in Bigfoot/Sasquatch as a flesh and blood entity, then Goatman could well have its connections there. During the 1950s, the legend may well have been born, after a gorilla-like creature was sighted at Prince George's County. Several search parties were organised, and sent in to the thickets to seek out the hairy monster, but to no avail. Locals who allegedly encountered the mystery beast said it gave off a pungent odour, omitted terrifying screams and stood over six-feet in height.

By the millennium, the legend had not faded. American paranormal-related T.V. show *Unexplained Mysteries* were on the case of the Maryland Goatman after strange sightings of a twelve-foot tall creature around the Arundel Mills mall construction site.



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Three male witnesses working at the location were spooked by a massive creature they observed just after midnight one night, and their sighting was backed up days later when a security officer spied the hairy, robust manimal.

*Unexplained Mysteries* sent their own investigative team along to the area, alongside local wildlife officials and police, who heard about the story in which the construction team had set up camp for the night in a van on the site, but were alarmed to see a large shadow running near to the vehicle.

The security guard who saw possibly the same animal was, in fact, an off-duty police officer. He was so intrigued by the sighting that he decided to search the area, but was terrified when his own gaze into the darkness was met by two glowing eyes from a creature taller than a human being. Footprints were also found in the area, set in mud, and measuring over twenty-inches in length. Sceptics argued that the witnesses had seen bears, after two black bears were seen at Washington.

So, is Goatman wrapped up in the mystery that has become known as Bigfoot? If so, then Goatman may well have existed for several centuries, although the more documented sightings of such a creature date back to around the early 1900s - 1924 to be precise - when a hairy, muscular creature was sighted near Churchville, Maryland by an eight-year old boy, and then around Gambrill State Park. Then also Leakin Park. These incidents were echoed in the 1960s, when a married couple were spooked by two red eyes which glared through their vehicle window one night.

At Carroll County, a police officer saw a large, hairy creature cross a road, and step with ease over a high fence. During the late '60s, a monster, dubbed the 'Blueberry Hill Monster', was seen by a team of workmen at the Pretty Boy Dam. The creature emerged from nearby woods.

In the 1970s, Bigfoot in Maryland was common knowledge. On May 29th 1973, Anthony Dorsey saw a Bigfoot near a reservoir - the same reservoir that seemed to have seen a lot of UFO activity. In 1975 at Rocks, motorist Peter Hureuk claimed he hit a big hairy monster as he drove at night. The creature allegedly ran into the woods clutching its side. Whilst at Fallston, a local man went into his yard armed with a .22 rifle to ward off stray dogs, when he was overshadowed by a looming creature that stood up behind a fence, and then ran into the woods.

The beast left tracks more than twenty-one inches long.

Twenty-five years later, in the Autumn of 2000, huge footprints from some unknown creature were found at Williamsport, and on October 15th, at Cecil County, an enormous creature was observed standing in a field by a male witness who was out for a stroll. So then, Goatman is Bigfoot. Simple as that. If only it was that simple. For some, believing in Bigfoot and other hairy, bipedal creatures is one thing, but to believe that a true Goatman exists is another.

But, judging by the folklore, Goatman has become far more than a misty campfire story for the ears of scared youths around a roaring, midnight fire. Now, it is time for



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Goatman and the *real* Satyrs of this world to show their true faces, and no longer exist as mythical bogeymen to keep the children well-behaved. During the Summer of 1989, a teenager named Juan Caraballo, was 'hanging out' with a group of fellow teenage friends, at a baseball field in New Jersey called Menantico Park, in Vineland.

The kids had been sharing a few jokes and generally messing about near the abandoned cemetery, but it was getting late, so they decided to leave. Juan decided to urinate before leaving, and so stepped into the woods to relieve himself. Before unzipping his flies, Juan was startled by a rushing through the bushes in the darkness; something moving zigzag fashion through the trees at a pace. All of a sudden, before Juan could move, a figure appeared just six-feet away in the woods. It was a frail creature, thin in build and just over four-feet in height. The animal was grey in colour, had goat-like legs and an eerie grin as it stared at the terrified witness.

As Juan stepped back, the creature sped off into the blackness of the woods, leaving Juan frozen to the spot. Gathering his senses, Juan, hurried back to his friends and noticed that one of them was staring horrified into the woods. Juan shook him from his terrified state, and they both spoke about what they'd seen. The other teenagers had seen nothing, but the other guy who had seen something described a group of dark figures in the woods that approached the teenagers.

This story was submitted to the superb *Weird N.J.* magazine in 2001. And although the witnesses appeared confused by what they'd seen, surely, even in their naïve and

seemingly terrified state, they'd proven that a Goatman of sorts exists? Maybe. Consider this then. A creature which appeared at Fort Worth in Texas, which became known as the Lake Worth Monster, was often described as a half-man, half-goat creature and was sighted around the Mosque Point area of the lake in 1967. Many teenagers who hung around the area on cool evenings often described the horror of encountering the Satyr which caused such a stir that it made the headlines in the pages of the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* on July 12th 1969.

The beast, said to be active in the vicinity of Greer Island at this particular time, was said to stand over seven-feet in height and be covered in greyish scaly feathers! Several motorists had reported that whilst travelling in the area, a tall creature had attacked their vehicles and left unusual scratch marks on the hood and flanks. The Lake Worth Monster was then never seen, or at least reported, again. But sightings of shaggy-haired man-beasts have always persisted in these kind of locations, but remained unconnected.

The Snallgaster of Maryland folklore is said to be a whisper brought to the area by German settlers many years ago, but describe various vague forms from leathery winged dragons to goat-like monsters. The Rock Hall Humanoid is another of those fleeting legends, said to haunt Kent County. Goatman exists in many forms, shifting from a seven-feet tall hairy hominid to a scaly, leathery satyr. As a flesh and blood creature, Goatman would probably have a vast territory, something akin to the Sasquatch, a manimal which inhabits many parts of the U.S. either as a

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muscular-framed creature, or small, shaggy-haired river-bottom dweller. These have become the Goatmen in the same way the elusive cougars of Pennsylvania and New Jersey have become the Jersey Devils. Yet there are still those few and far between sightings and glimpses of 'other' creatures, real or not, that make Goatman more credible as a Satyr-like being, rather than simply a shadowy, hairy figure.

Whilst Washington's Boobashaw of the '60s and '70s was nothing more than a ghostly, tall, skeletal, figure of woodland lore, the Hibla Bashi of Iraqi lore, or the Scottish Urisk, have propelled Satyr-like manimals across the world. Little seems known of the Hibla Bashi, for it's an obscure blood-sucker from Iraq said to be half-man, half-goat, but it exists, out there. The Urisk, as mentioned in Karl Shukers *Flying Toads To Snakes With Wings* book, is described as, "...half-man, half-goat. It supposedly inhabits the loneliest expanses of the Scottish Highlands, where it was sometimes venerated as a nature deity, rather like the Greek demi-god Pan, until the coming of Christianity."

Strangely, yet coincidentally enough, the meaning given at the beginning of this article referring to the Satyr, mentions a creature that appears to symbolise a desolate area, or an area that may well become barren. Satyrs as nature entities then are certainly out there, symbols not understood by modern man, but no different to so many other creatures as symbols or warnings of things that may well have once been, are, or going to be. The Centaur is a very similar zooform creature, often ignored now, but once a powerful entity, alongside the likes of the

Harpy of mythology - great creatures that are still reflected in today's society, but sadly only sighted as fleeting shadows.

The Nuckelavee, also said to inhabit parts of Scotland, is certainly not a world away from Maryland's Goatman or other such human-animal hybrid chimeras. The



Nuckelavee is said to symbolise drought, or the withering of once productive crops. It appears as a long-snouted beast, part human and part horse, and said to have one single, bloodshot eye on its forehead. In the United States, the Nuckelavee may well have a few eerie relations.

The Centerville Centaur was a half-man, half-horse entity seen in 1963 in Illinois by James McKinney. Although the legend died out regarding the creature, police headquarters at the time took more than fifty phone calls from alarmed witnesses describing a similar entity! The most popular Centaur-like sighting in the world of cryptozoology has to be the horse-



humanoid bizarre spectre witnessed by a young couple in 1966 as they drove through country lanes near the Lord Dillon Estate, Co. Louth, Eire.

Witness Margaret Johnson described the obstacle before them as, *"...a huge horse with a man's face and horrible bulging eyes. I could see by John's (Margaret's partner) face that he saw it too. I think I screamed, but both of us were so frightened that we were paralysed. The thing had a horse's body. But it was the face, leering and hairy and huge which shocked."* A legend relates to the 18th century pertaining to an altercation on the steps of Lord Dillon's house, being Rath House. It is said that an argument ensued between the house's then owner, a protestant, and the parish priest. Allegedly, the priest's horse reared up and smashed one of its hooves onto the steps, leaving a print which is still said to be there today. Why such a spectre should appear on the road, though, is another mystery entirely. But aren't most of these obscure critters?

During the early 1990s, on the Norfolk-Lincolnshire border Mr Knott saw a peculiar spectre standing by the side of the road that was horse-like in form, but had the face of a man. The strange incident, which took place on a King's Lynn back road, was reported by Mr. Knott's wife, Nicky, on popular television chat show *This Morning* in 1996, and discussed by cryptozoologist Karl Shuker. The Empusae is also known as a Centaur-like creature, but has cannibalistic tendencies, whilst the obscure Black Devil of the Shoshones was once known by the Indians as the 'cannibal stallion', although researchers into the creature believe that witnesses mistook horse and rider for such a creature.

So, if Goatman is nothing more than a campfire legend, there are still Satyr-like and Centaur-like monsters across the globe, existing - possibly - as nature deities, rarely sighted, and yet often incorrectly perceived. The other possibility

is that Goatman is another mystery altogether. That being Bigfoot, but why should a muscular hominid covered in hair be confused with something said to resemble half man, half goat? Or, like so many legends across the planet, Goatman is nothing more than the bogeyman within. An inner fear projected into the ruins of some abandoned asylum, a tulpa of terror manifested by one too many - a midnight yarn, set to linger in the shadows of time, like some tattoo on the mind.

Goatman is the reclusive hermit said to live in the local woods. A bearded man in rags, wielding an axe but only to chop himself some fire wood to keep his woodland shack warm from the nightly chills. To the kids he is the axe-murdering pet killer. Goatman is also the mutated, freakish lunatic scientist cast to the eerie thickets by his own tormented experiments on goats which backfired, turning him into a hideous night prowler said to wander the isolated backwoods. Or so the kids would have you believe. He is also the dark stranger that peers into vehicles with steamed windows caused by the heavy breath of cavorting couples. He is the legend of 'The Hook' too. He is the phantom hitchhiker on the lonely bridge, the banshee scream in the night, the strange claw markings on the bonnet of a rusted, abandoned car.

Goatman is nothing more than an urban legend, but he is so much more when all the fictitious mutterings are silenced and the bark stripped away. This phantom is flesh and blood in so many ways, and he exists across the world, because the Jersey Devils, the Mothmen, and Monkey Men like him, have existed for centuries, they are dominant in mythology across the world, but now confined to the past and also cinema as fantastic beasts. Unfortunately, those that seek them and fail miserably to find them, as flesh and blood animals immediately dismiss them as mythical, but there is a truth there, but a truth that lurks deeper than in the woods that hide them.

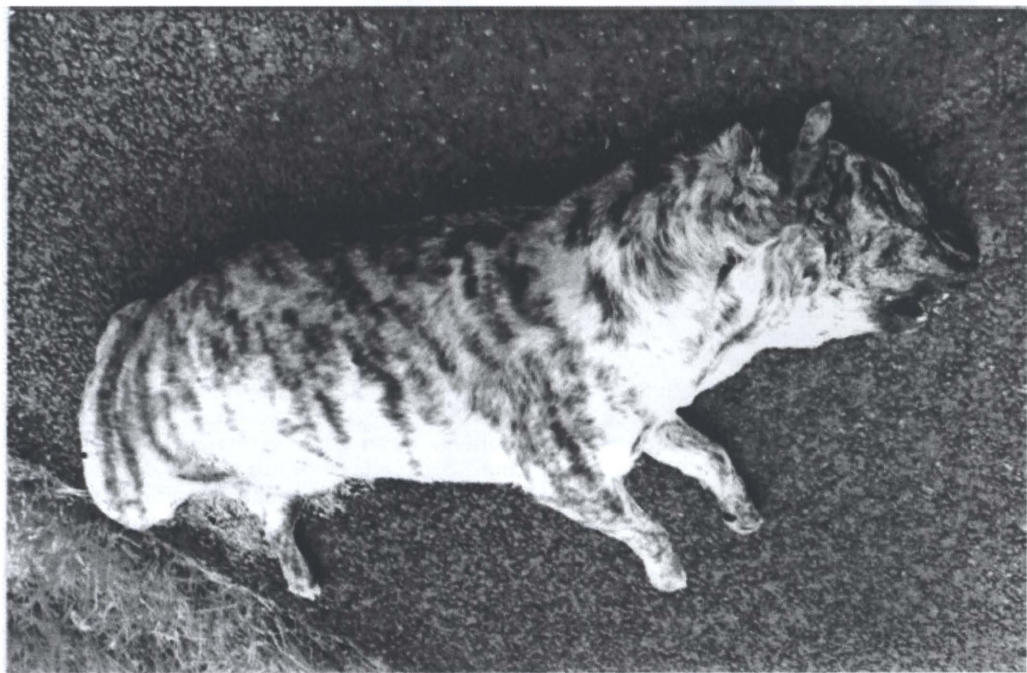


# CHESAPEAKE CADAVER

In April, I was a guest on George Noory's syndicated radio show, 'Coast to Coast'. I have always enjoyed doing this show, even though the time difference means that I have to be awake at an unholy hour in the morning, and stay *compus mentis* for three hours, swilling down coffee and munching away on bars of chocolate in a vain attempt to fool the great American public that I am awake. It is one of the largest, and most popular, syndicated radio shows in the world and is broadcast on over 500 US

radio stations alone, as well as others across the world. Its listeners number several million, and it has been suggested that it could be as high as ten million. It is the third time that I have been on the show, and I never fail to get some interesting feedback.

This occasion was no different. I sat up in bed, being fed breakfast and coffee by my lovely wife, as I chatted away happily. When the show was over, I received a



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number of interesting emails, including this one from Kay Howard.

Dear Jon,  
I heard your interview on Coast-To-Coast last night, and thought you might be interested in seeing a picture of this animal.  
My son lives close to me in Chesapeake, Virginia, US.

Nightly, he was hearing his chickens cackling, and the next morning, after counting his flock, he would be missing at least one. He decided to stay up and stand guard to discover the animal that was causing the disturbance, but was unsuccessful. Then one morning, while feeding his horses, he heard a car hit an animal. Thinking a dog or cat had been hit, he ran to the front of the house to see if he could help, in case the animal had not been killed. The picture is of the animal that was hit.

As you can see, it has stripes down its face, has no tail, has extremely short legs and large fang like teeth. My son called a Vet that lives close by. The Vet said he had no idea what the creature was. No one that saw it could give it a name. Two days later, another animal just like this one, was also killed by a car less than a half mile away. My son lost no more chickens. I was wondering if you could tell us what it is. Thank you.

Kay Howard

My immediate and admittedly knee-jerk reaction, was that it was a tanuki, or racoon dog - an Asian species which has spread across much of Europe and North

America. I wrote as much to Kay. A few days later she replied..

Dear Jon,

Thank you so much for identifying the animal for my son and me. I read about it on *Wikipedia*, and I must say that I grew sick to my stomach to read that some of them are skinned alive. I'm sure I'll have nightmares tonight!

I wish I had more pictures to send to you, but that was the only picture my son took, but I just talked to my son and he said that last year when the circus was coming to town, the large truck turned over about a mile from his house, and many animals escaped. There were llamas and peafowl, and many other breeds of animals running through the woods. Not all were captured. That is probably from where the racoon-dogs came.

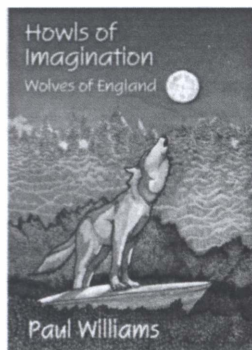
Last night two more of his chickens were taken, and more of the animals have been killed on the road. He is going to stay up tonight to try to catch them in the act of stealing his chickens. If he can get one, he will take pictures from all angles, and I will forward them to you. Thanks again for the information.

Kay Howard

But then again... The more I look at the picture, the less like a racoon dog it appears. But if it ain't a tanuki, what the heck is it?

Over to you.....

# REVIEWS



*Howls of Imagination: Wolves of England*  
by Paul Williams  
ISBN 978-1-872883-98-2  
Published by Albion Press  
107 p £12.95

I like wolves and always have done since my first memory of forming such opinions. To me, they are the most handsome of all mammals and have a certain ethereal grace and beauty about them. So, when asked to review a copy of Paul's book I jumped at the chance, as I thought it would be 'just up my street'.

It covers different aspects of 'wolfdom', from the animal's history in England to contemporary beliefs. I have often wondered why such a beautiful animal ended up being associated with, more often than not, evil. The wolf crops up in many fairy stories and is quite often landed with the role of the bad guy. By nature, many of these stories, as Paul points out, contain the obligatory moral message. However, they are nearly always quite dark and disturbing, and there obviously has to be the aspect of good versus evil.

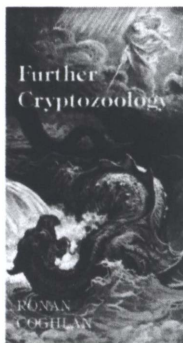
But it is a shame that the wolf has been

added to the list of evil-doers, especially as they are the grand-daddy of all dogs and - let's face it - dog is man's best friend.

So I was particularly interested to read the chapter on 'the big bad wolf' in which Paul looks at how the depiction of wolves has changed over the years; from once being looked upon as stupid creatures to being seen as cunning. Paul has done a lot of research into producing this book and it shows.

If you, like me, are a wolf-lover then this is definitely the book for you.

**Corinna Downes**



*Further Cryptozoology*  
by Ronan Coghlan  
ISBN: 978 09544936-8-4  
Published by Xiphos Books  
223 p

This is the third in a series from Ronan, following on from the *Dictionary of Cryptozoology* and *Cryptosup*. It is full of more cryptids, and folkloric "creatures" some of which even those here at the CFZ have never heard of, and makes for interesting, and sometimes amusing, reading.

Ronan is one of fortune's great, unsung humorists. Each year at the Weird Weekend, his talk is one of the highlights, and certainly the funniest.

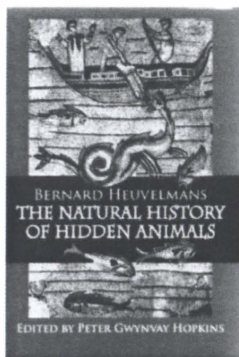


I am sure he must have had a giggle when writing some of this book. Recently, he also completed a Sherlock Holmes novel, which amongst others includes a thinly veiled reference to our beloved editor. This will be reviewed in the next issue of *Animals & Men* after all, we wouldn't want Ronan to get above himself with two book reviews in the same issue!

So, to end, if you have never heard of The Australian Pigman, The Bogey of Craddock Marsh or The Boggy Bottom Monster amongst others, then this is the book for you. Well done Ronan! **Jane Rochester**

### *Natural History of Hidden Animals*

by Bernard Heuvelmans  
 Publisher: Kegan Paul International  
 ISBN-13: 978-0710313331  
 £69.50



This is a collection of the late Dr Heuvelmans' articles and unpublished works. The effect is somewhat patchwork. Bits of the book are better written than others. Chapters cover the already familiar ground of the discovery of large animals after Cuvier's pronouncement that none such could exist.

More interesting are the chapters dealing with the birth of cryptozoology and the names of early researchers in the field.

Most of us have heard of the likes of Dr Antoon Cornelius Oudemans, Charles Gould, Frank Buckland or Willy Ley, but who has heard of William Winwood Reade (1838-1875) who explored Africa and

returned with stories of mystery beasts; or Dr Ingo Krumbiegel (1903-1990) who, in 1950, published a book called *On New and Undiscovered Animal Species*?

The book listed possible cryptids including the Angolan water lion, a Sumatran black tapir, the king cheetah of Rhodesia, a Venezuelan ape, the Queensland tiger, and the waitoreke of New Zealand. Others include Wilhem Bolsche (1861-1939) who in his book *Dragons: Legend and Natural Science* postulated the late survival of prehistoric reptiles, and Mervyn David Waldegrave Jefferyes (1890-1957) who investigated reports of winged monsters in Africa, and believed them to be surviving pterosaurs.

This book works best as a springboard for further research on these fascinating people who deserve more recognition than they get.

However, after completing this review, I found out the price! Just under seventy quid for a mere 145 pages is nothing short of extortion. Kegan Paul have treated Heuvelmans' legacy appallingly. The long gaps between books are bad enough. The price of the first two was disgusting, but they were major works, and thus the price could have been justified by an adept breadhead spin doctor.

However, this is a minor work, of interest only to the specialist, and to charge seventy quid for it is obscene. We strongly urge you all to order it from the library, and photocopy it for all your friends.

This rampant profiteering must stop, and stop now!

If CFZ Press can put out 400pp Crown Quarto books for fifteen quid and still turn a modest profit, then surely there is no excuse for Kegan Paul, with their resources, not being able to do the same.  
**Richard Freeman**

# CFZ NEWS

## MUSEUM MAYHEM



Life at the CFZ is always hectic, but the events of this summer have taken the sublime to the ridiculous. On a personal level, it's been a complicated 18 months. Not only did I have to deal with the complex machinations of winding up my father's estate, but I also had to buy the place from my brother, sort out some serious anomalies with the Land Registry, which - for a while - threatened our entire plans for the CFZ Museum and Visitor Centre when it transpired that part of our grounds, which had been bought on a handshake from a local farmer 50 years ago, had never been properly completed. For a few weeks at least, it appeared that the nascent and half-built museum actually belonged to a local property developer and not to us.

This was all amicably sorted out, and we would like to thank the gentleman concerned for being so reasonable.

However, on top of that, Corinna sold her house in Lincolnshire, moved all her goods

and chattels into Myrtle Cottage, and on 21st July married me. This has not just made me the happiest man in the world (and the luckiest), but is proving of immeasurable value to the CFZ, as Corinna is an experienced administrator of many years standing, and in comparison, the rest of us are just a bunch of amateurs. We now have stock lists, ledgers, and lists of things to do that are no longer written on the back of cigarette packets.

The building of the Museum has continued apace, although our original plans to have it ready for public inspection in May have fallen by the wayside.

This has been due partly to the whole caboodle costing considerably more than we had originally budgeted, and partly due to unavoidable delays caused by the God-awful weather.

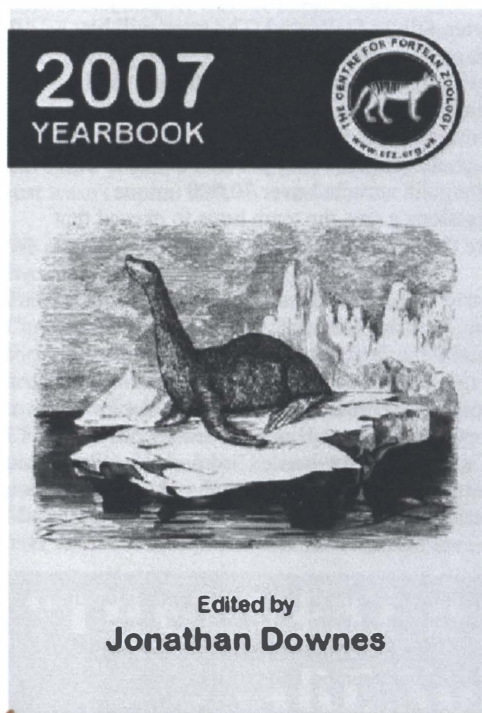
Most of the structural work has now been done, but it will be a long time before the interior is complete. However, the electrics - probably the most complicated and expensive part - were completed by our old friend and benefactor, Peter Channon,



a few days before the wedding.

We would also like to thank those jolly nice people at Travis Perkins, the builders' merchants, who donated us all of the wood for the flooring. Others who should be mentioned in dispatches include Rawle Gammon & Baker, builders' merchants of Bideford, who, whilst not actually donating anything, gave us substantial trade discounts that would normally be unavailable to persons outside the higher echelons of the building industry.

## YEARBOOKS



We are also pleased to announce (OK I should have announced this in the last issue, but have been kicking myself during the intervening months for having completely forgot) the resumption of the CFZ Yearbook. When we originally started this series back in 1995, the idea was that it should come out annually. Between 1995 and 2004, we only missed one year, and 2000/01 were included in the same volume.

However, with the tumultuous upheavals that hit the CFZ in 2004 - 2006; both Richard's and my father died, we moved to the country, and managed to balance our family and personal obligations with CFZ ones, carrying out four trips to America, one to Sumatra, one to Mongolia and one to The Gambia, the CFZ Yearbook fell by the wayside.

We are happy to announce that the CFZ 2007 Yearbook is now available, and we are on track to produce the 2008 volume before the end of the year. The 2007 Yearbook contains:

- ◆ THE BLAKEMERE MERMAID OF MORRIDGE, AND MERMAIDS OF OTHER PLACES by Lisa Dowley
- ◆ MAN-TIGERS by Jon Hare
- ◆ THE MYSTERY MENAGERIE OF GLAMORGAN by Oll Lewis
- ◆ IDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT by Noela Marshall Mackenzie
- ◆ L-NUMBERED CATFISH by David Marshall with photographs by Dr Iggy Tavares
- ◆ BOGEYMEN OF ARGENTINA by Neil Arnold
- ◆ THE SEAL SERPENT The Case For the Surreal Seal by Robert Cornes



Whilst on the subject of yearbooks, we have now decided to do something that I have always flatly refused to countenance. We are re-issuing all the ring-bound yearbooks from 1996 to 2004 as perfect bound paperbacks. This is going to be a reasonably slow process as we are waiting to sell out of current stocks before we republish. The 2004 volume has already been reissued in this form.

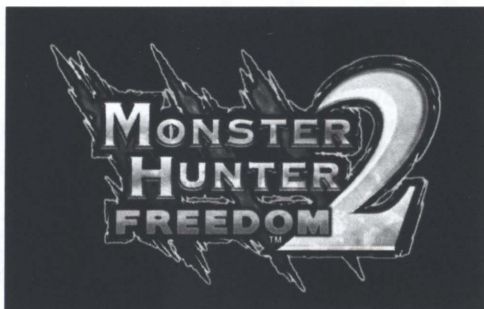
## CAPCOM®

### ANACONDA ADVENTURES

The CFZ is very happy to announce that in partnership with Capcom - the internationally famous computer games publishers - we are sending an expedition to the South American country of Guyana in November.

From Capcom's press release:

"The expedition aims to locate and collect giant Anaconda specimens with reports coming in of locals seeing the indigenous snakes as big as 40 feet long - twice as large as they are supposed to be - in nearby swampland. The CFZ hope to collect some young specimens and bring them back to their new Zoo facility in Devon. The expedition also aims to look for evidence of the mythical 'didi', a feared South American creature, described as being apelike, covered in hair, and responsible for the deaths of hundreds of cattle who were found with their tongues ripped out.



The expedition will take place over three weeks this November and will be made up of the CFZ specialist team of Monster Hunters as well as the London Metro Newspapers own intrepid reporter, Oliver Stallwood. The team will be taken on a journey deep into the South American jungle by a native guide and will be posting daily blogs and footage of their adventures via their satellite enabled phones at CFZ.co.uk. The last blog posted on a CFZ trip to Mongolia attracted over 70,000 unique impressions a day, the team hope to exceed that figure this time round.

The trip will mirror the action from Capcom's classic Monster Hunter Freedom 2 which is now officially the fastest and biggest ever selling PSP title in Japan with 2.4 million units shipping worldwide and its not even out in Europe yet. Monster Hunter Freedom 2 is a non-stop epic hunt-or-be-hunted 3rd person action adventure game and continues the Monster Hunter series with more content and options than ever before.

Gamers increase their play skills as they battle through breath-taking environments against bloodthirsty Monsters in some of the best graphics ever seen on PSP system.

# THE SYCOPHANT



This year's Weird Weekend proved - if any proof were needed - that the CFZ *are* the axis of evil. One of our speakers was held on terrorism charges.

But it wasn't quite as exciting as that. Grigoriy Panchenko, our star speaker and almaysty expert from the Ukraine, was at Zurich Airport to catch a connecting flight to the UK. In his pocket he had a set of hand exercisers - like mini bullworkers - and when these showed up on the airport x-ray any chance he might once have had of catching his connecting flight went completely out the window. We knew nothing of this, and it



took a string of increasingly frantic telephone calls across three countries before we could ascertain what had happened to him. It all worked out in the end and the only person to really suffer was poor Lisa Dowley, who spent something like seven hours in the unlovely surroundings of Birmingham International Airport waiting for him.

Well it was the crypto-wedding of the year and as well as the lovely Corinna making an honest man of the CFZ Director, the event



also may have jump started a new career path for CFZ Art Director, Mark North. His wedding cake featuring the director and his bride adrift on the ocean in the slightly battered CFZ rubber raft, threatened by a spectacular sea monster was a marvel to behold. His

attention to detail even having our beloved director wearing his favourite anarchist t-shirt was breathtaking. A career in confectionary surely beckons.





# CONISTON IS SO BRACING

Typeset by Dr. Derek Doctors  
*"...I will yet be honoured"*